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•
REBECCA GUY

HOMELANDS

On The
World of

MAGIC
The Gathering™



GREG & TIM
HILDEBRANT



HOMELANDS™

On the
world of

MAGIC™

The Gathering

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MAGIC
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Created by Richard Garfield



You hold not **one** world in
your hands, but **many**.

If you have the **knowledge**. If you are
among that **rank** of men and women.

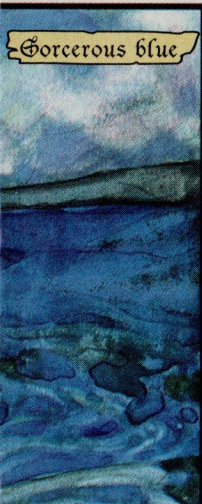
And things **between**, and things
yet unnamed.

If you have earned the **privilege** of
calling yourself a **planeswalker**.


All things radiate **mana**.

Each land refracts its **spirit** through
that mystic energy's rainbow.

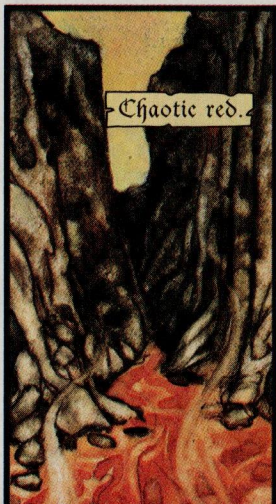
Gorcerous blue.




Abundant green.



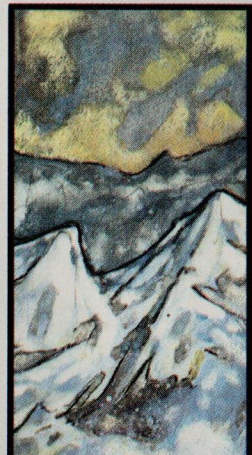
Chaotic red.




Dread black.



Nurturing white.



A wizard with a long white beard and a red robe is shown from the waist up, standing on a rocky, uneven ground. He has his right arm raised high, palm facing forward, and his left arm extended outwards. He is surrounded by a swirling, fiery orange and yellow energy. The background is a mix of yellow and green, suggesting a sky or a magical field.

And each **planeswalker** must choose the hand to play in a heady mix of adventure and menace.

YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER TOLGATH **WHELP**, RAVI!

Ravi hasn't a **fraction** of her adversary's **experience**.

PRETTIER THAN **MOST**--HEH--BUT STILL BENEATH THE **BOOT** OF EVERY ANCIANT!

She hasn't a **whisper** of the power he's **collected** through time and guile.

But the young **magician** has one thing on her side.

Desperation. Sweaty and howling.

It **inspires** a furious scrabble to **leech** from the planet's pool of red mana.

It fuels a rash **incantation**.


I CAN'T DECIDE...
KILL YOU NOW?
OR **PLEASURE**
FIRST...?

A **summons** from across
the dimensions.

The Orcish Veteran is **torn** from its
home and made **slave** to Ravi's desire.

Hunger that now runs as **fierce**
as the crimson mana itself.

I GET **BOTH**
IN ONE!




The world is **Ulgrotha**.
The name means "garden."

But all that **grows** here now are
seeds of **death**, watered in **blood**.

The Citadel belongs to the
Tolgath, upstart planeswalkers
starving for **knowledge**.

The **Ancients** are jealous wizards, quick
and cruel to defend against any **trespass**
into "their" mysteries.

NO...IT
NEVER ENDS!
IT NEVER...



This is how the two clans **justify**
the battle they have fought.

Their **reality** is the simple brutality of **war**.
And that **savagery** needs no reason at all.

...ENDS...

...NOT **FREELY**,
NO. BUT THERE
IS A WAY...

A spell of **teleportation** takes the last of Ravi's magic.

Her Master gave her the **artifact** for a **sinister** time like today.

Fingers scraped **raw** take her to the top of the Spire.

...FORCE THEM TO LET IT GO! FORCE THEM TO **RELEASE** THIS **MADNESS**...

"A **cleansing**...." he promised. But he couldn't tell her everything.

Because no **sane** being would know the truth and ring the **Apocalypse Chime**.

Artifacts shatter.

Creatures melt.

TRAAANGGG



Planeswalkers wither to ash.

Below the Basalt Spire, Kavi shields herself from the Chime's fury.

Her old Master **promised** the vault would protect her.

N-NO! THE RIFT BETWEEN WORLDS IS OPEN--WE HAVE ALL THE MANA WE NEED-- WE H-HAVE--

IT WILL PASS..

...IT HAS TO...

Across Ulgrotha, the **sound** of Apocalypse rings loud.

Nothing that needs mana can survive the colorless fire that **chars** the globe.

The only shades of color left **flow** in a single stream from across dimensions.

And the last disciple of mana is **safe** within her tomb.

OH, MASTER... YOU NEVER TOLD ME HOW TO **OPEN** IT!

PLEASE-- ANYONE, **ANYTHING** --LET ME OUT!

The old Master couldn't tell his apprentice **everything**.



No sane being **could** know the truth
and **ring** the Apocalypse Chime...

The land dies.



Green turns to stone,
stone crumbles to dust.

Generations sweep
aside the pain.



KRAKDOOM

And **sometimes** there comes
a chance to **live** again.



ALL RIGHT, THEN...
I CAN CALL THIS
PLACE **HOME!**

FOR A
TIME...

There are **planeswalkers**
who **covet** danger.

Treasure.

Passion.

Power.



The force that drives
Feroz is **curiosity**.

That sense of **wonder**
for worlds **unknown**.

HERE'S A FIND...
A **DIDGERIDOO!**
PRETTY GOOD SHAPE
STILL, AS WELL...

Under Feroz's guidance, the
artifact makes a sound that is...



...somewhat **unappealing**.

It would seem Feroz is a much better **mage** than musician.

Still, it gains him an **audience**.



ENOUGH OF THAT **NOISE**, MY LITTLE FRIEND!

OH-OH.

YOU'RE HURTING MY **EARS**!



IT CALLED YOU? I'M SORRY! IT'S A MAGICAL **ARTIFACT**...

"MAGIC?" NOT THE WAY **YOU** PLAY IT! BUT IT BELONGS TO MY TRIBE--AN HEIRLOOM, I'D SAY!

TO **PROTECT** YOURSELVES, NO DOUBT!

ARTIFACTS LIKE THIS--SPELLS, TOO--THEY CAN **SUMMON** LIFEFORMS. **ENSLAVE** THEM, ALMOST...



...AND LEAD TO TERRIBLE **SUFFERING**. I-I WON'T USE THEM..

YOU MAKE AS MUCH **SENSE** AS MY UNCLE BORTHON.--AND HE'S NOT THE MOST STABLE OF US.

YOU'RE GOOD FOR A **LAUGH**! I'M SANDRIUU OF THE ANABA MINOTAURS... KEEP ME **COMPANY** ON MY JOURNEY!

And that easily, friends are made.

Miles south, hours later.

SURELY YOU MUST
KNOW OF MAGIC, SANDRUU!
YOUR **MARKINGS** --THEY'RE
ALL THE COLORS
OF **MANA**!

YOU HAVE GREAT
POTENTIAL AS A
PLANESWALKER
YOURSELF!

LOOK THERE!
ALIBAN'S TOWERS,
THEY'RE CALLED.

IT'S SAID A
SPECIAL GESTURE
CAN MAKES THE
ROCKS GROW
BENEATH
YOUR FEET!

JUST LIKE
THAT, A DEFENSE
AGAINST ENEMIES...
A PLACE TO CAMP
FOR THE NIGHT.

BUT THE TOWER'S
GOT NO **DOORS**. AND
THERE'S NO ESCAPE
WHEN THEY **COLLAPSE**...
AS THEY'RE LIKELY
TO DO!

IS THAT YOUR
MAGIC, FEROZ?
IT'S "GREAT
PROMISE?"

THE MANA IN THIS
LAND...IT'S **UNBALANCED**.
I DON'T KNOW WHY.

EVEN THE
WEATHER
IS TWISTED
BY IT!

WITH THIS MUCH **FUR**,
YOU'RE HAPPY FOR ANY
DROP IN THE **HEAT**!

HELP ME! HEELLPP
MEEEEE!

IT SOUNDS LIKE
A SMALL **BOY**!

BUT **WHERE**--?

SHLIKKTSS

HELP ME!
HEEEELP MMEEE!

WE'RE CLOSE!
THAT VOICE IS
JUST AROUND-

They say the **Root Spider** has
the brain of a young child.

Not just the ones it's eaten--

--but in terms of its own intelligence.


HEELLLP MEEE!

It can mimic a dozen sounds
with hungry **cunning**.

THAT'S ONE
UGLY BOY!

Beneath Sandruu's **bravado** is a
dread realization. Even **his** muscle
can't break the arachnid's **webbing**.

It would take a **miracle** to save
both man and Minotaur.




Or at least an **angel**.

Serra's Angels.


Souls of fallen **warriors**, taken
new form in white mana.

YOU'LL GO **HUNGRY**
TONIGHT, INSECT!



ALL YOU'VE SPUN
HERE IS YOUR OWN
DOOM.

The **war spirits** rage like fire, bent on the
execution of their mistress's fatal command.



**NO! LET
IT GO!**



IT WOULD
HAVE KILLED
YOU BOTH!

THE SPIDER
WAS ONLY FOLLOWING
ITS *NATURE*...YOU
CAN'T CONDEMN IT
FOR THAT!

A SIMPLE
"THANK YOU!"
WOULD MAKE
A BETTER RESPONSE
FOR MY HAVING
SAVED YOUR
LIFE!

...BUT THERE SEEMS
TO BE SOME *GUILE*
BENEATH ALL THAT
WEBBING...



"WELL, WATCH
ME TURN *UGLY!*
I CAN'T *ABIDE* MAGIC
THAT SUMMONS
CREATURES!"

"MY 'ANGELS' AREN'T
CREATURES! THEY'RE
RAW *PSYCHE*..."



...AND HERE
BY THEIR OWN
CHOICE!

HMM...SELF-
RIGHTEOUSNESS MAKES
YOU ALMOST *ALLURING*,
PLANESWALKER!

ALMOST?

I MEAN...I'M
SORRY! I START
RUNNING ON AT THE
MOUTH AND--

LIKE
"PLANESWALKER"
AND "MAGIC" WEREN'T
ODD ENOUGH--NOW
WE GOT "*ANGELS!*"

I'LL TELL UNCLE
BORTHON TO BE SURE
AND SET A *PLACE*
FOR *TWO*...

Between the Dark Barony and
the Border Gates of Aysen...

Between drunken lament
and joyful dance...

There is An-havva Inn

OH, IT'S BEEN
A LONG TIME SINCE
I CAME TO THIS
WORLD, FEROS...

...AND ALMOST AS
LONG SINCE I'D THOUGHT
ABOUT *LEAVING*. SOMETHING
IN THE LAND--IT *SPOKE*
TO ME!

THERE WAS A
WOUND THAT NEEDED
HEALING...AND THE PROMISE
OF HOW *WONDERFUL*
IT COULD BE WITH A
LITTLE CARE!

YOU'VE BEEN
DOING MORE THAN
"A LITTLE!" I CAN
TELL...IT'S IN THE WAY
EVERYONE WE'VE MET
LOOKS AT YOU!

THEY...MAKE UP
STORIES. SOME OF
THEM, THEY...THINK I'M
A *GODDESS*.

I CAN
SEE *WHY*...

AND I CAN SEE
IT ONLY TAKES TWO
MUGS OF STEAMING
ALE TO TURN YOU
FROM LECTURER
TO *FLIRT*.

"THE *MANA* HERE, SERRA...THERE'S SOMETHING VERY *WRONG*, ISN'T THERE?"

"ASK THE *TRAVELERS*, FEROZ--IF YOU COULD! A WAGON OF HOMESTEADERS...A SHIP OF DWARVES..."

"OUT THERE IS A *DEAD ZONE*, FEROZ. THE *MANA*, IT- IT *ENDS*!"

"...TO GO PAST THE HORIZON IS TO NEVER RETURN!"

"EVERY COLOR EVAPORATES. KNOWS ITS TOUCH AND *SUFFERS* THE SAME FATE."

TAKE YOUR "*TRADITION*" BACK TO THE KHER RANGE, SANDRUU!

BURY IT WITH THE REST OF THAT *DYING* TRIBE YOU CALL HOME!

OH-OH.

UM...*FRIEND* OF YOURS, SANDRUU.

MY *BROTHER*.

LIKE MANY *YOUNG* MINOTAURS...*HUNGRY* FOR SOMETHING "*NEW*." TAKEN IN BY *VICE* AND VIOLENCE...

YOUR "*MAGIC*," FEROZ--IT COULD HAVE A *POSITIVE* EFFECT ON OUR RESTLESS YOUTHS!

THE HORNS DON'T MAKE THE *BULL*! I WANT TO LEARN...

IT HAS ITS DARKSIDE, SANDRUU... YOU MUST BE *CAREFUL*!

WINE MAKES THE STARS *WALTZ* THE HEAVENS.

LET'S *DANCE* THE NIGHT 'TIL DAWN!

...THEY BECOME PIT-FIGHTERS-- BODYGUARDS--AND THEY ARE *LOST* TO US!

LET'S TAKE THE *PARTY* INTO THE STREET!

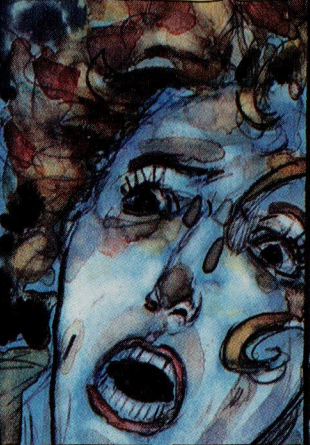


The horses sweat
fire and blood.

And draw hell in
their wake.

Cassie An-hayva knows the toll
to cross the Carriage Road.

KLAKOK KLAKOK



Agony under the charger's
sparking hooves.



But there is magic in the air.

And a planeswalker
who will not bend
to the wicked in
the night.



Mana surges up
from the earth--

THIS-WILL-
NOT-BE!

--shaped by the wizard's
hands into a Brass Man.



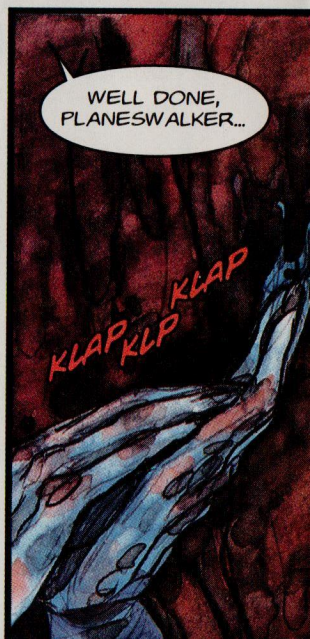
An artifact "creature"--

--a steaming, clanking,
ratcheting agent of mercy.

KLAKOK KLAKOOM


UHIK!

YOU WANNA
DANCE?



WELL DONE,
PLANESWALKER...

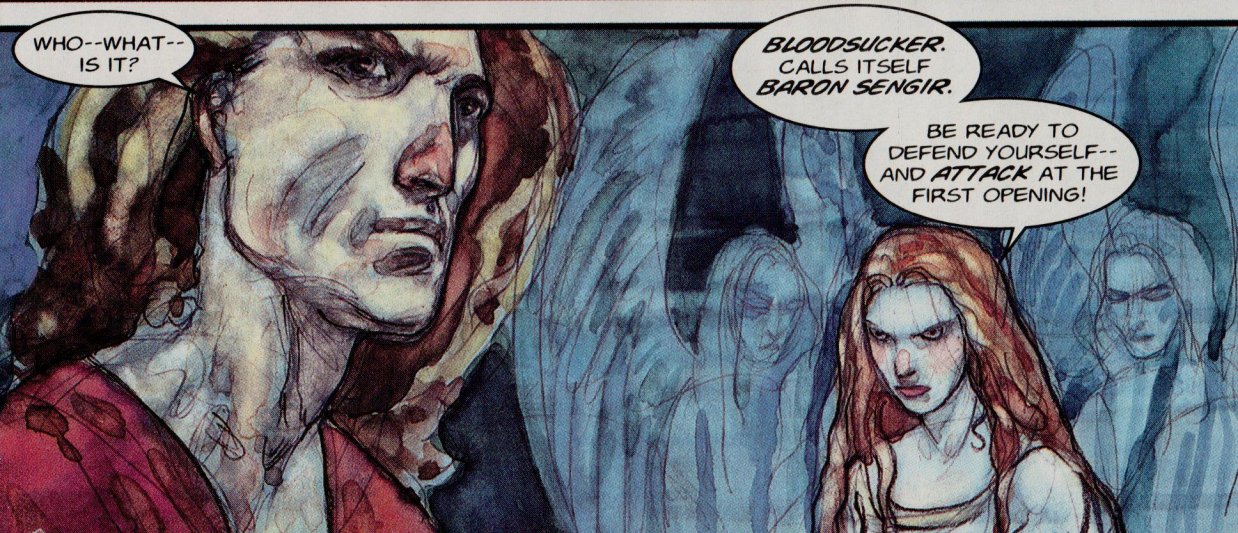
KLAP KLAP KLAP

A man with long dark hair and a goatee, wearing a red robe, stands in a dark, ornate doorway. He is looking towards the viewer with a serious expression. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a gothic or medieval setting.

...I SAY, WELL DONE,
INDEED! I WAS AFRAID
I'D HAVE TO PICK THAT WENCH'S
BONES OUT OF THE
UNDERCARRIAGE.

NASTY BUSINESS,
THAT.

DELIGHTFUL TO
SEE YOU AGAIN, SERRA.
WON'T YOU INTRODUCE
ME TO YOUR NEW
PLAY MATE?

A close-up of a man with a red robe, looking surprised or concerned. He has a wide-eyed expression and a slightly open mouth. The background is dark and textured.

WHO--WHAT--
IS IT?

BLOODSUCKER.
CALLS ITSELF
BARON SENGIR.

BE READY TO
DEFEND YOURSELF--
AND *ATTACK* AT THE
FIRST OPENING!



PLEASE! MY
MOTIVATIONS
ARE STRICTLY
HOSPITABLE.

ACCEPT MY
INVITATION
TO DINNER.

I'D SOONER
STARVE.



IF I DON'T GET
HOME *SOON*, I
MAY HAVE TO
EAT HERE...

...AMIDST THE
RELATIVELY *INNOCENT*
CITIZENS OF
AN-HAWA

IT'S A
GIFT!

YOU HAVE A
UNIQUE *CHARM*, BARON.
LIKE HONEY-DIPPED
MAGGOTS.



YOU WANT
ME TO *GORE*
HIM FOR YOU,
FEROZ?

WE'LL BE *ALL*
RIGHT, SANDRUU...I'LL
BE BACK SOON TO
START YOUR
LESSONS!

YOU'RE LOOKING
RATHER *FLUSHED*,
DEAR GIRL. I HAVE
A...*REMEDY*...

DON'T
EVEN *THINK*
ABOUT IT.



"THEY TOOK A PLACE ON
THAT DEATH WAGON FOR *OUR*
SAKES--CRAZY *FOOLS*!"

"IS THERE NOTHIN' WE CAN
DO FOR THEM, CONSTABLE?"



RAISE A *GLASS*
TO THEIR *SACRIFICE*,
FRIENDS!

RAISE A GLASS
TO *LIFE*!

Gengirian bats cry out.

Children are torn from sleep,
shaking with cold sweat.



Their vaporous jaws
dripping hunger--

--ghost hounds hunt for
a taste of mortal fear.

Cemetery gates shudder, barely able to hold back
the zombie rabble raised by thick swamp mana.

Greater werewolves let
loose savage howls--

--a din both mad, and
inspiring madness.

BEAUTIFUL
NIGHT,
ISN'T IT?

Cross yourself.

Say a prayer.

Light a candle.

Nothing will do any good.

This is Castle Gengir.



Each tour of the countryside,
Baron Gengir chooses a new
villager to drive the dread carriage.

...and rewards them
with a feast of the
screaming coachman.

After his travels, the Baron
personally unbridles his steeds...

WHAT'S THAT
SOUND?

MY HORSES...SUCH
NOISY EATERS! PAY
THEM NO MIND...

A SIT DOWN
MEAL, IF YOU
PLEASE, GRAND-
MOTHER...FOR
ALL OF US.

GUESTS...OOO,
SUCH A LONG TIME
SINCE! THEY STAYIN'
TO EAT...OR
BE EATEN?

YOU'RE
TOO KIND,
BARON.

NOT REALLY.

BUT IT'S
NICE OF YOU TO
SAY SO.


"GRANDMOTHER?"

I WOULDN'T THINK
BEING UNDEAD MADE
FOR MUCH IN THE WAY
OF KIN.

SHE'S NOT
BLOOD--SO
TO SPEAK!

I FOUND
HER YEARS
AGO...RANTING
AND TRAPPED
UNDER A
CRUMBLING
SPIRE, FAR INTO
THE DEAD
ZONE.

CRAZY AS
THE NIGHT IS
BLACK...BUT
SHE BAKES
A DAMNED
FINE
UNICORN!

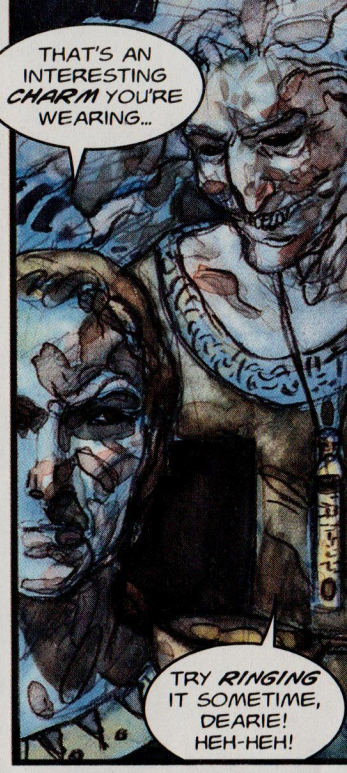


YOU DIDN'T DRAG
US HERE TO DISCUSS
RECIPES.

PUZZLE THAT OUT ON
YOUR *OWN*, SERRA? OR
DID AN *ANGEL* WHISPER IT
IN YOUR EAR?


I WANT
TO TALK
MAGIC.

HA! EVEN *SWAMP*
MANA CURLS AWAY AT
YOUR FEET!



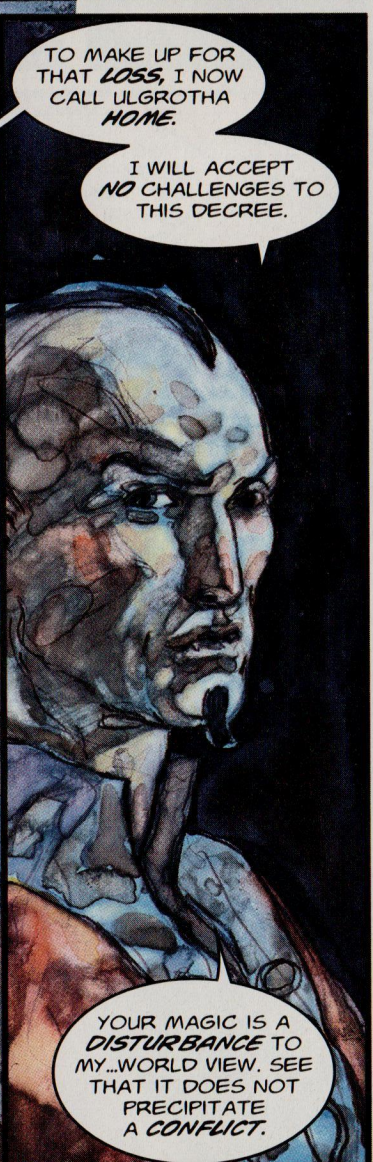
THAT'S AN
INTERESTING
CHARM YOU'RE
WEARING...

TRY *RINGING*
IT SOMETIME,
DEARIE!
HEH-HEH!



I KNOW *MAGIC'S*
TOUCH--ALL TOO WELL! IT
TORE ME FROM MY REALITY
... *SUMMONED* ME TO THIS
WORLD.


I WAS PLAYED
FOR A PAWN! CURSED--
ALL I KNEW AND LOVED
WERE *GONE* TO ME!



TO MAKE UP FOR
THAT *LOSS*, I NOW
CALL *ULGROTHA*
HOME.

I WILL ACCEPT
NO CHALLENGES TO
THIS DECREE.

YOUR *MAGIC* IS A
DISTURBANCE TO
MY...WORLD VIEW. SEE
THAT IT DOES NOT
PRECIPITATE
A *CONFLICT*.



YOUR
"*DECREE*?"
THIS WORLD
DESERVES
A CHANCE
AT *LIFE*!



BUT I AM
ALL FOR *LIFE*,
SERRA.

AFTER ALL...
I HAVE
TO *FEED*.



I CAN'T SPEAK
FOR SERRA--

OH, YES
YOU CAN!

--BUT THIS ISN'T
FEUDAL LAND IN NEED OF
A BARON! IT'S LAND THAT'S
BEEN *TILLED* TO
NEAR-*DEATH*--

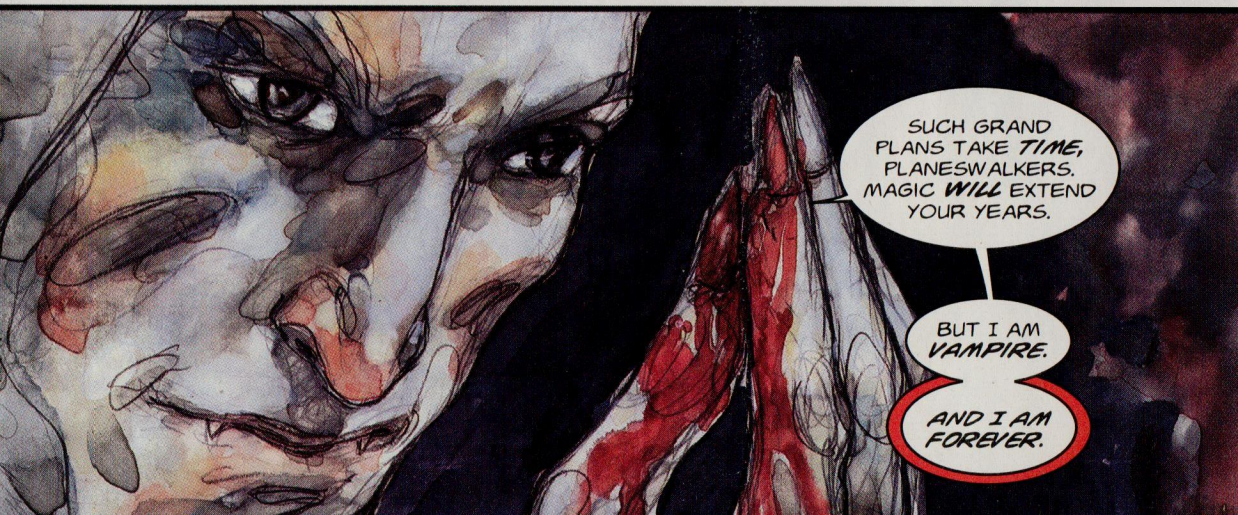


--AND IT NEEDS
GARDENERS TO
NURTURE
ITS REBIRTH!

GET IN THE WAY
OF *THAT* WORLD VIEW
AND THEN YOU'LL SEE
SOME CONFLICT!

SINK YOUR
TEETH INTO *THAT*
DECREE!

HEY--AIN'T YOU
GONNA STAY FOR
DESSERT?



SUCH GRAND
PLANS TAKE *TIME*,
PLANESWALKERS.
MAGIC *WILL* EXTEND
YOUR YEARS.

BUT I AM
VAMPIRE.

AND I AM
FOREVER.

The seeds of **renewal** are sown in many places across Ulgrotha.

The floating island.

Waystation of Sea Dwarves, a **stow** for their supplies

WHAT'S THIS?!

YOU'VE NO **PLACE** HERE, STRANGER!

SPEAKIN' A' WHICH...HOW DID YOU **GET** HERE? AIN'T NO BOAT...

"AIN'T" NO NEED. THE LAND **PROVIDES**, MY FRIENDS! LET TELL YOU ABOUT SOMETHING CALLED **MANA**...

A Wizards' School takes root.

The manufacture of enchanted Clockwork Gnomes is a first lesson in **power** tempered with **benevolence**.

FRIENDLY LIL' **THING**--THIS ONE LOOKS LIKE ME!

TOO **GOOD-LOOKING** FOR YOU!

LET THE MANA **GUIDE** YOUR TOOLS...

The city of Onella

Good **intentions** still need tending.

A **leader**, groomed to rise from the flock, still seeks direction.

IT SHOULD BE **YOU** TO GUIDE THEM, MISS SERRA! AN OLD MAN LIKE ME--

--IS FILLED WITH YEARS OF **EXPERIENCE!** YOUR PEOPLE CAN LEARN SO MUCH FROM YOUR LIFETIME, VENERABLE ABBOT--

TAKING THE **PAGAN GOD'S** NAMES IN VAIN! THERE'S SUCH A THING AS **DECENCY** IN THIS TOWN, YOUNG PUPS--

--THINK ABOUT **THAT** WHEN YOU'RE CHEWING THE **SOAP** I'VE GOT FOR YOUR MOUTHS!



THINK ABOUT **DECENCY** WHEN YOU'RE CHEWING THE SOAP I'VE GOT FOR YOUR MOUTHS!

PLEASE.

HOW WAS THAT?

AHEM...MUCH BETTER.

Long months of study produce many **graduates**. But none more gifted...or deserving.

I'M SO **PROUD** OF YOU...

YOU SOUND LIKE A **FATHER, FEROZ**...BUT YOUR HORNS ARE TOO **SHORT** FOR ME TO BE THE MINOTAUR YOU NEVER HAD!

SERIOUSLY, MY FRIEND--YOU'VE OPENED **WORLDS** TO ME AND MY PEOPLE!

NOW IT'S TIME TO **EXPLORE** THEM IN PERSON...

And the years between carry many **adventures**.

For Sandruu, though, the greatest is **Love**.

WE HAVE FEROZ TO THANK US, **KRISTINA!** WITHOUT HIM, I NEVER WOULD HAVE FOUND THIS WORLD... OR YOU!

YOU SEE, **MASTER TAYSIR**-- IT'S JUST AS I TOLD YOU!

SHE TURNS A **COLD EYE** TO YOUR AFFECTION FOR THIS... **ABOMINATION!**

KRISTINA WILL **YET** LEARN TO LOVE ME, RAVIDEL.

JUST AS THIS **ANIMAL** WILL LEARN **DISCIPLINE**...



On Ulgrotha

YOU'VE DONE
WONDERFUL THINGS
WITH THE *AVIARY*,
SORAYA.

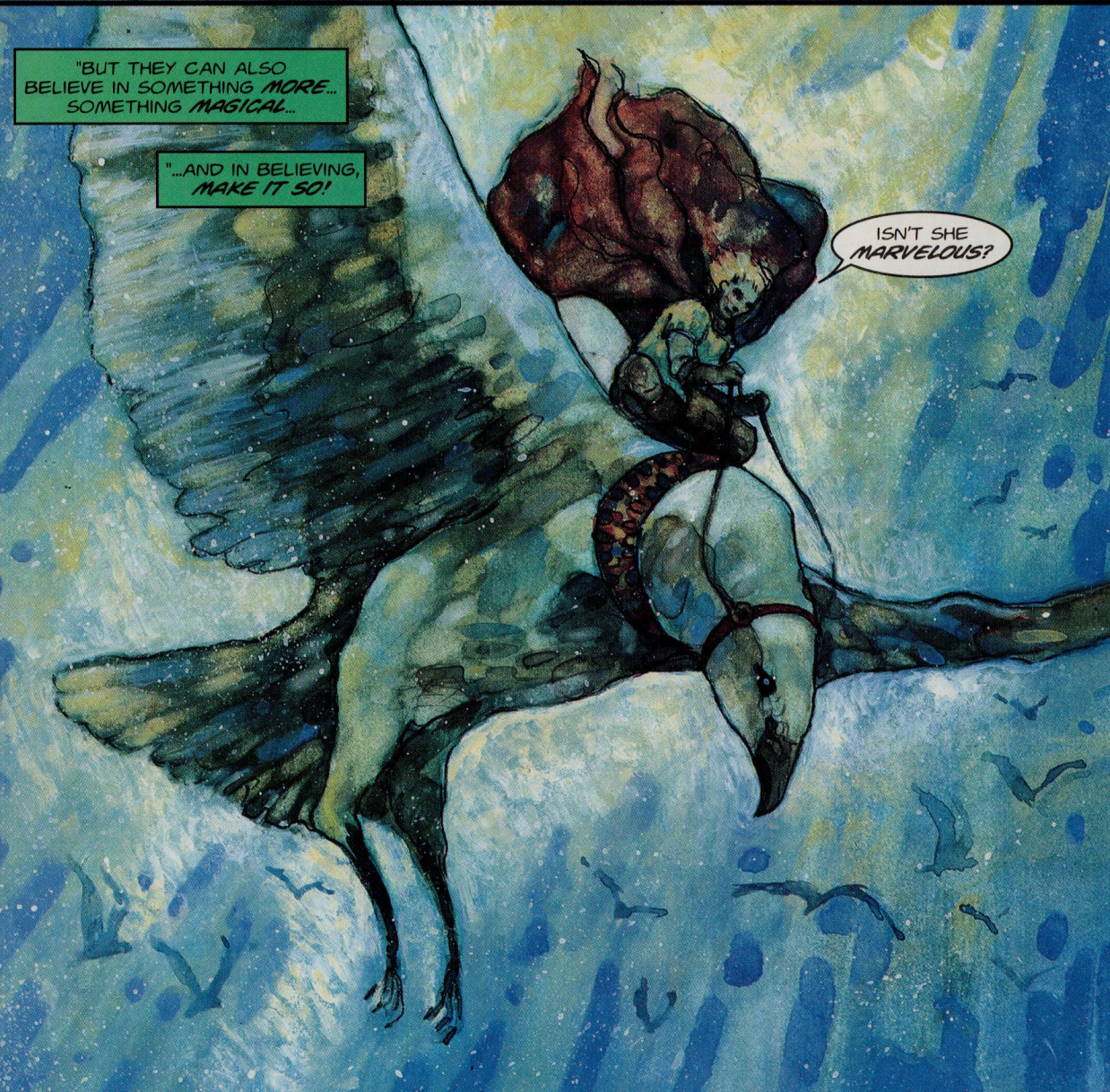
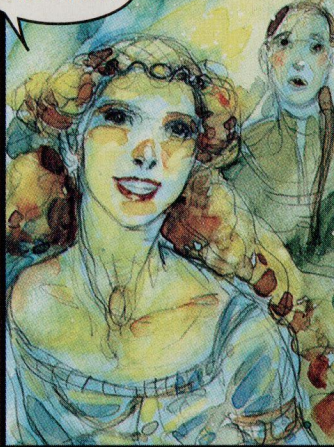
IT WAS A
WONDERFUL IDEA,
MISS SERRA! A
SANCTUARY TO
BOND WITH
NATURE!

BUT I'M TROUBLED
BY STORIES I'VE HEARD
LATELY--MERMAIDS AND
FEATHERED GIANTS--SUCH
NONSENSE!

CAN'T PEOPLE
ACCEPT THE WONDERS
WE KNOW AS TRUE?

OH, MY,
GODS.

THEY *CAN*,
FALCONER.



"BUT THEY CAN ALSO
BELIEVE IN SOMETHING *MORE*...
SOMETHING *MAGICAL*...

"...AND IN BELIEVING,
MAKE IT SO!

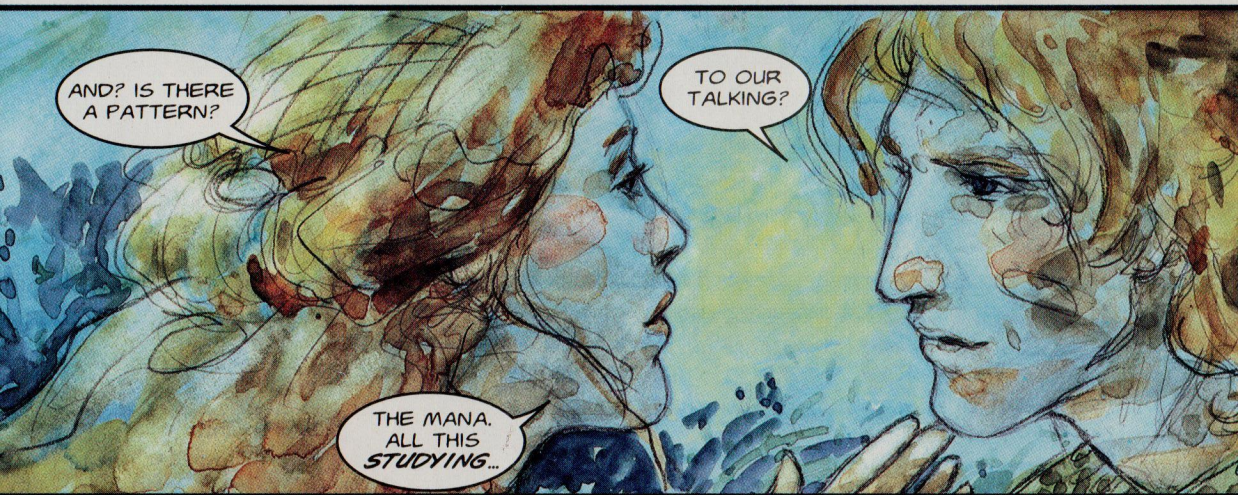
ISN'T SHE
MARVELOUS?



I'VE BEEN WORKING
UP THOSE CHARTS WE
TALKED OVER--

WE TALK A
LOT, DON'T WE?
WE'VE TALKED
FOR YEARS...

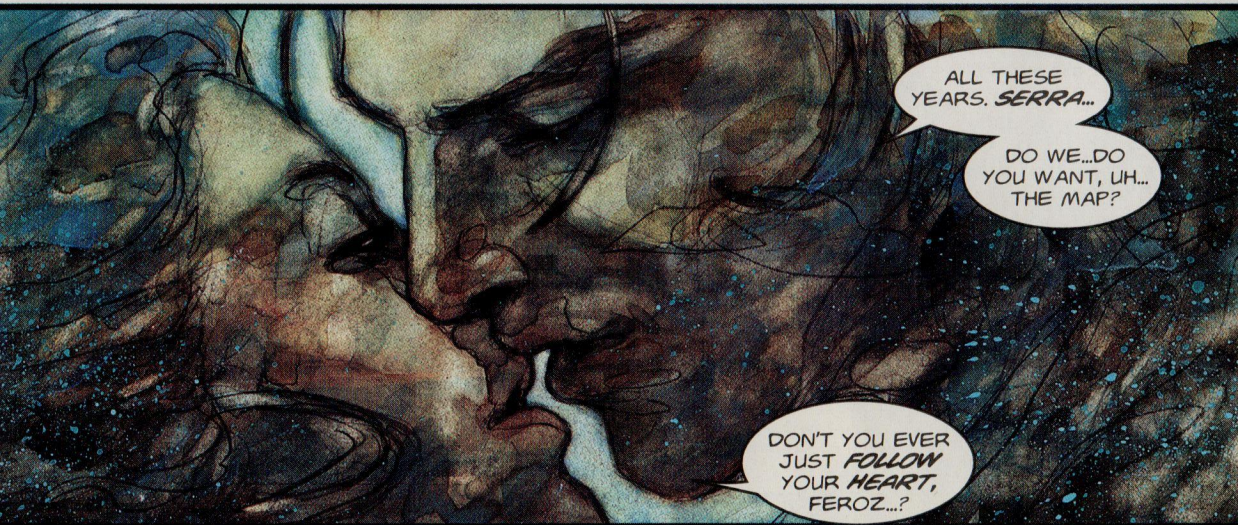
WELL...YES. I'VE,
UM...MAPPED OUT THE
MANA CHANNELS
HERE, AND--



AND? IS THERE
A PATTERN?

TO OUR
TALKING?

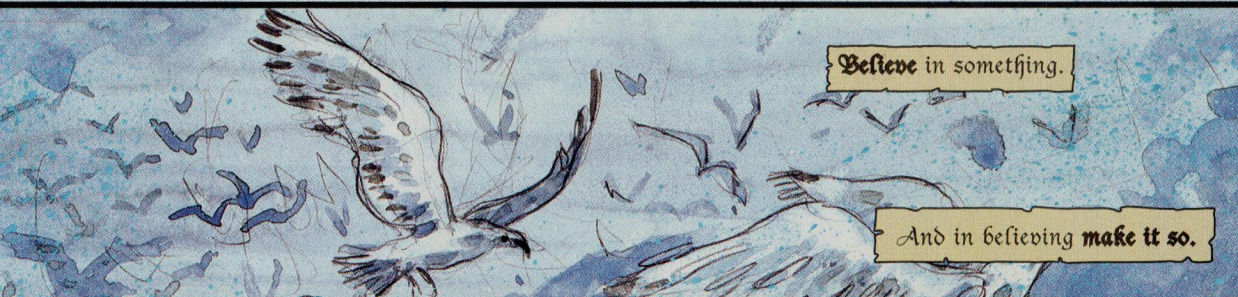
THE MANA.
ALL THIS
STUDYING...



ALL THESE
YEARS. *SERRA*...

DO WE...DO
YOU WANT, UH...
THE MAP?

DON'T YOU EVER
JUST *FOLLOW*
YOUR *HEART*,
FEROZ...?



Believe in something.

And in believing make it so.

The Roskun Range.



SHRAAK

KRISTINA...

RUNNING CAN'T
SAVE YOU, CREATURE! I
CAN FOLLOW ANYWHERE--
ANY WORLD!



SSSKREE

SANDRUU'S BACK--
IN PAIN IN PAIN

But the vampire was not the only
danger to paradise.

WHAT HAVE
I DONE?

TRZAAK

"PLANESWALKER!"
HA!

GOOD JOURNEY,
BEAST! YOU'RE GOING
TO A COLD WORLD
ACROSS THE
GALAXY--

I EXPECT YOU'LL
MAKE IT BACK...IN A
MILLENNIUM!

The falcon had been gifted
with *speech* to warn against
Sengir's shadowy moves.

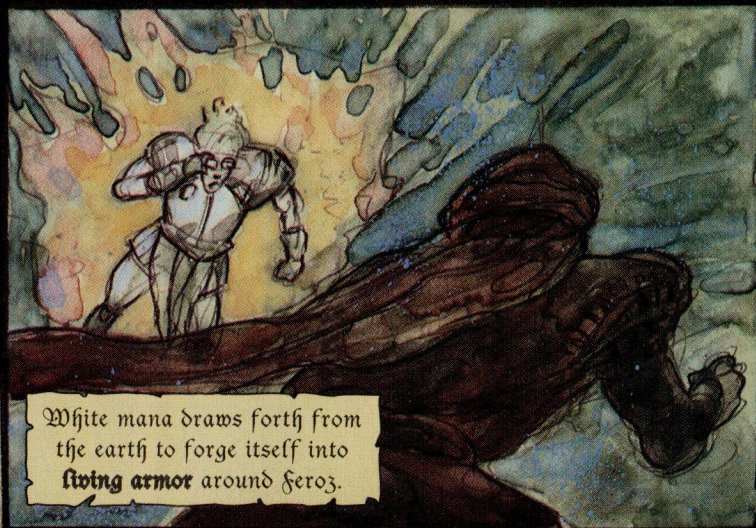


NO!



REAL
COMPETITION.

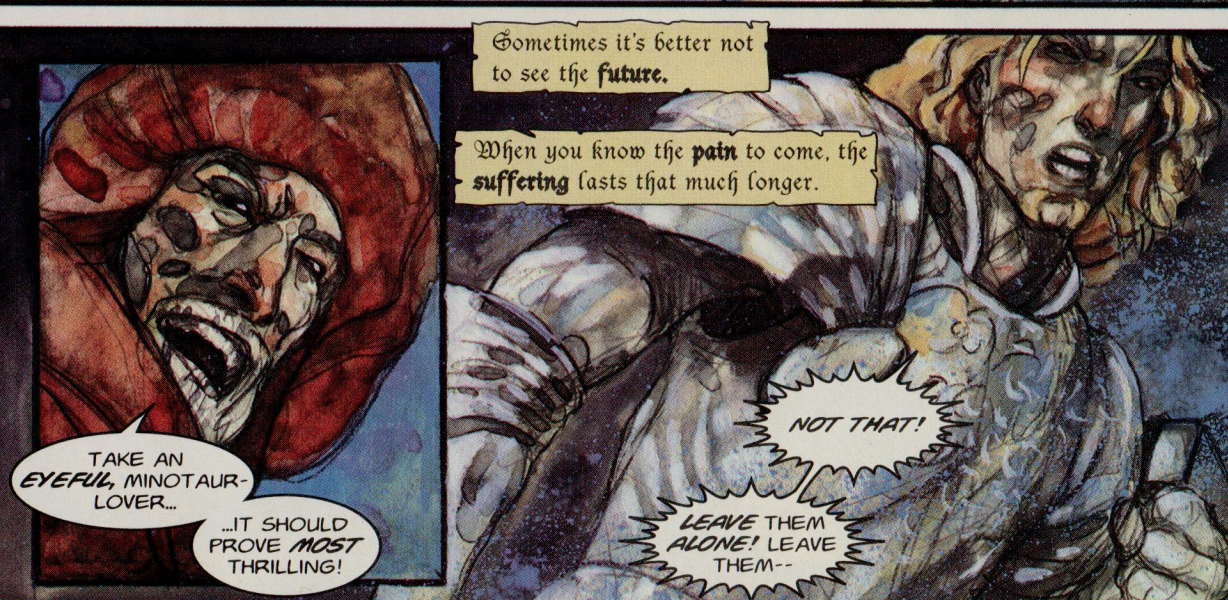
LET THE
GAME BEGIN!



White mana draws forth from
the earth to forge itself into
living armor around Feroz.



The Glasses of Urza divine
Caysir's hidden **strategy**.



Sometimes it's better not
to see the future.

When you know the **pain** to come, the
suffering lasts that much longer.



TAKE AN
EYEFUL, MINOTAUR-
LOVER...

...IT SHOULD
PROVE **MOST**
THRILLING!

NOT THAT!

LEAVE THEM
ALONE! LEAVE
THEM--



TO ME.

THEY BELONG
TO ME.

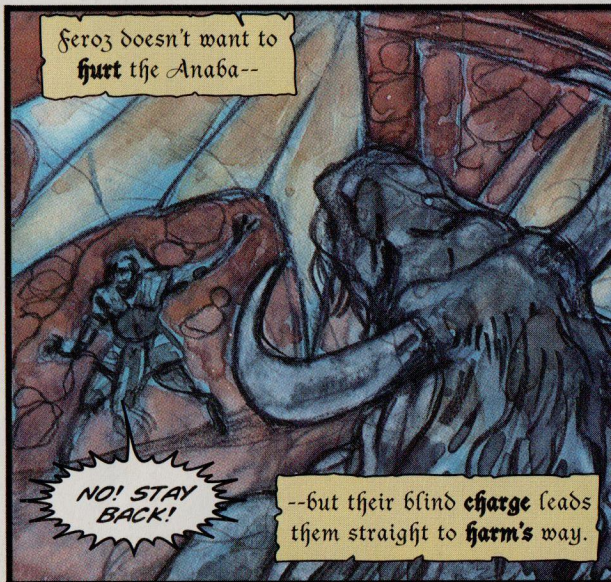
SANDRUU'S
TRIBE...

A spell of **summoning**.
A curse of Enslavement.



Green mana provides defense--

--a living wall, a
Roterohopter artifact.



Feroz doesn't want to
hurt the Anaba--

NO! STAY
BACK!


--but their blind **charge** leads
them straight to **harm's** way.



An Aladdin's Ring and a Rod of
Ruin **grasped** in his right hand. A
Gerrate Arrow **launched** from his left.

Feroz unleashes the deadly power of his
artifacts to drive Taysir to his knees.

DAMN YOU!



YOU DON'T WANT
TO PLAY *NICE*,
PLANESWALKER...

...THEN NEITHER
WILL I!

Rage and **panic** flare.

Red mana follows in their wake as
Taysir commands an **earthquake**--

--and quickly loses control of the
destruction he's conjured.

The nearby cliffside gives way,
shattering the carved pictograph history
of the Anaba minotaurs--

--crashing down to **bury** doomed
members of the tribe.

TAYSIR!



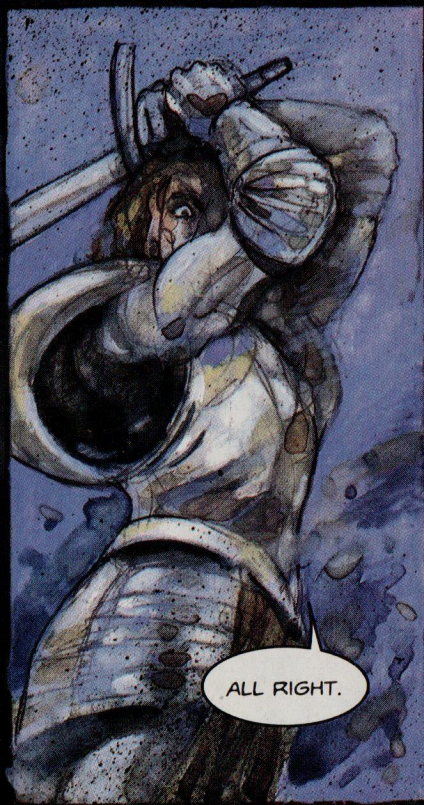
M-MY LEG...
I THINK IT'S
BROKEN...



THAT'S THE
LEAST OF YOUR
WORRIES.



A-A LITTLE
MERCY,
PLANESWALKER...

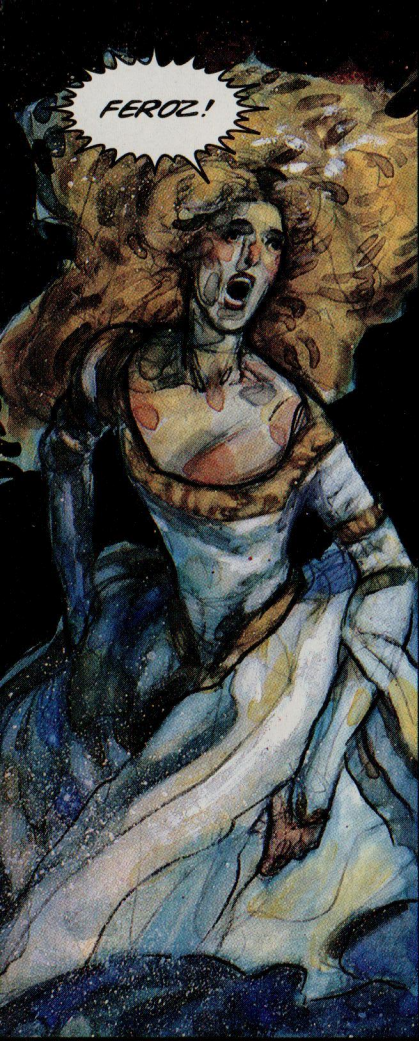


ALL RIGHT.



SHRAAAAK

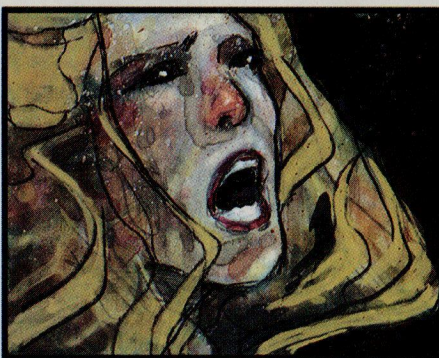
EVERY BIT AS
MUCH AS YOU SHOWED MY
FRIEND.



FEROZ!



OH, MY DEAR
SWEET FEROZ...



WHAT...WHAT
HAVE YOU
DONE?




I FOLLOWED
MY HEART...



TIME CAN
SANCTIFY EVEN THESE
REMAINS...


The Spiritcrafter
sees a future
where Taysir
can redeem
his sins.



In this age, however,
on this world, the
anguish he caused
would be **slow** to fade.

But wounds do heal. And, with the passage
of **years**, it's time again to feel **joy**.

WE HONOR THE
MEMORY OF THOSE LOST
TO US BY ASKING THEM
TO **BLESS** THIS UNION
OF FEROS AND SERRA.



YOU WEAR **RINGS**
OF PRECIOUS METAL, SO
THE **WORLD** MAY KNOW
YOUR **VOW**.

YOU HAVE **MARKED**
YOUR **BODIES** WITH SYMBOLS
THAT **DECLARE** YOURSELVES
TO ONE ANOTHER.

YOUR **SOULS** SHINE
AS ONE. AND IN YOUR
LOVE, WE MAY ALL
GLIMPSE HEAVEN.

A home is made on an isle
far into the dead zone...

...Kept alive by magic that draws
rare **mana** from the **mainland**.

THE CHANNELS
HAVE SHIFTED, FEROZ. IT'S
SOLSTICE--ON WHATEVER
WORLD THIS MANA
COMES FROM...

THEN THE TIME
IS NOW...WHILE THE
CURRENT'S STRONGEST.
WE CAN'T RISK ANOTHER
LIKE **TAYSIR** FINDING
HIS WAY HERE.

NO. WE'VE
WORKED TOO HARD
TO MAKE THINGS
RIGHT.

WE'VE WORKED
HARD TO MAKE THIS
A **HOME**...

And **Feroz's Van** sweeps
out, across the globe.

Gateways vanish. Camouflage
rises against serying and detection.

Shields **protect** creatures from
being stolen away. A barrier
to **defend** against all trespass.

Across the **multiverse**, it's
as if Ulgrotha never existed.

But even with **protection**, there
are still **balances** to be struck.

I DIDN'T CREATE
YOU JUST TO SIT ON
ROOFTOPS, ABBEY
GARGOYLE...

I KNOW I'M TO
SEEK OUT **WRONG-
DOING**, MISTRESS
SERRA...BUT MY
JOINTS HAVE BEEN
SO **STIFF**...

WELL, GET OUT
OF THE RAIN
AND BACK TO
JUSTICE!


There are still **mysteries** to uncover.

THE CHARTS DON'T
LIE. WHATEVER **RIFT**
IS FEEDING THIS
WORLD **MANA**...

...IT'S RIGHT UNDER
SENGIR'S **CASTLE!**
EVERY COLOR...ALL
THAT **POWER!**

HE DOESN'T
KNOW...HE **CAN'T**
KNOW!

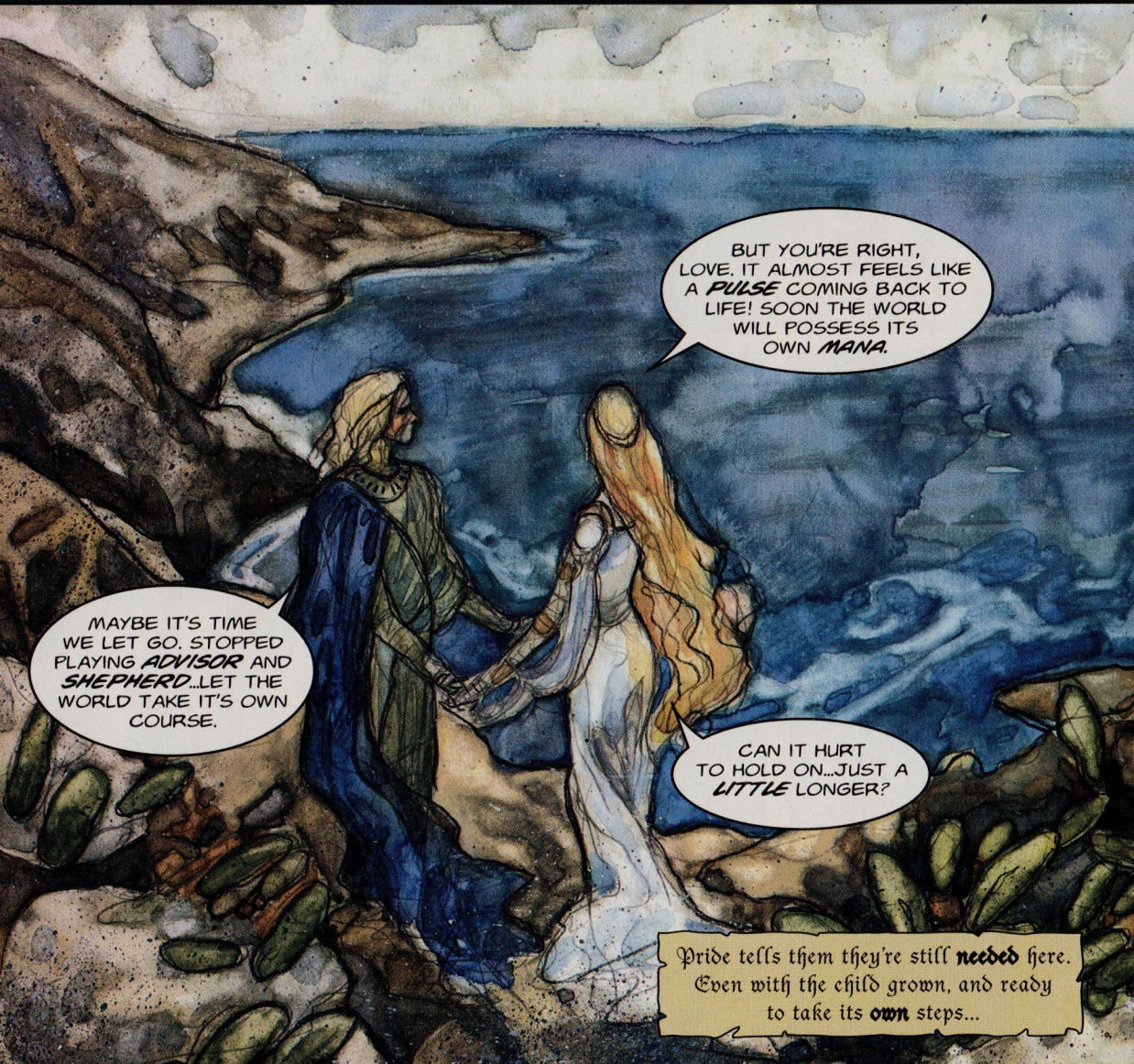
AND THAT MAY
BE THE **ONLY** THING
THAT'S **SAVING**
US ALL...



It's not **all** labor and worry.

IT'S MADE A **DIFFERENCE**, HASN'T IT? THE **CARE** WE PUT IN?

WHAT DOES IT **TAKE** TO MAKE YOU STOP **TALKING**?



BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, LOVE. IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE A **PULSE** COMING BACK TO LIFE! SOON THE WORLD WILL POSSESS ITS OWN **MANA**.

MAYBE IT'S TIME WE LET GO. STOPPED PLAYING **ADVISOR** AND **SHEPHERD**...LET THE WORLD TAKE ITS OWN COURSE.

CAN IT HURT TO HOLD ON...JUST A **LITTLE** LONGER?

Pride tells them they're still **needed** here. Even with the child grown, and ready to take its **own** steps...

...Eager to find its
own **identity**.

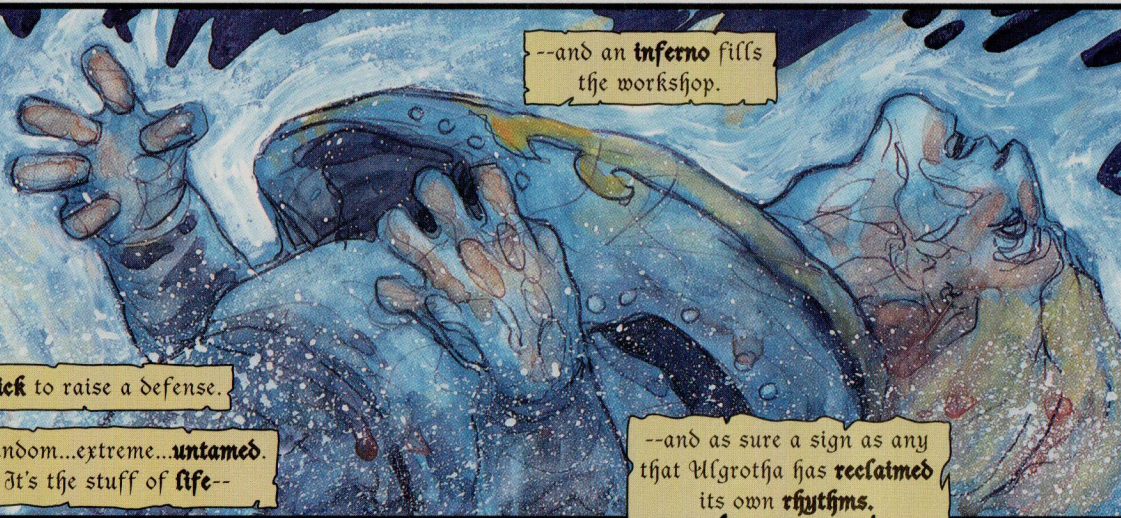


The experiment is simple. A
study of a **fire elemental**, held
fast in crystal.

GLKAAK



Then the crystal
cracks--**shatters**--



--and an **inferno** fills
the workshop.

Too **quick** to raise a defense.

Random...extreme...**untamed**.
It's the stuff of **life**--

--and as sure a sign as any
that Ulgrothja has **reclaimed**
its own **rhythms**.

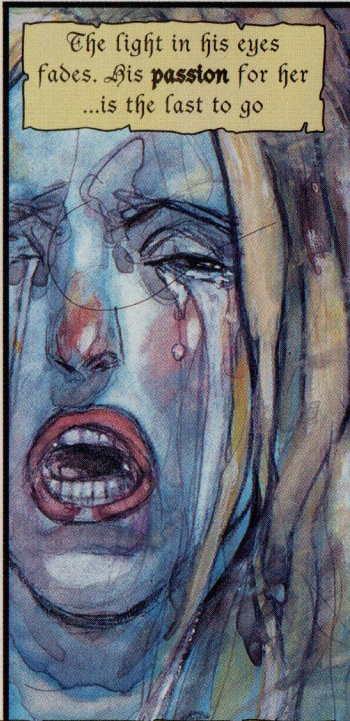
**FEROZ? NO NO
NO...FEROZ!**



THE **FIRE** WAS...ONLY
FOLLOWING ITS **NATURE**...
...C-CAN'T CONDEMN IT
FOR THAT...

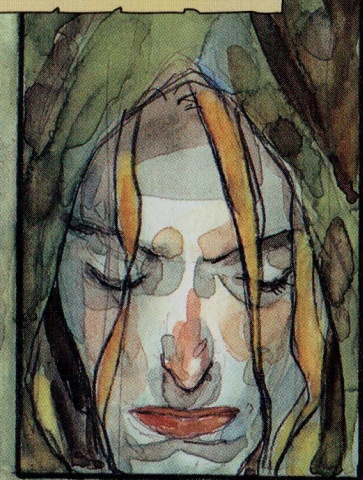


The light in his eyes
fades. His **passion** for her
...is the last to go



And like that, Gerra is **alone**.

She walks the streets of
Onella lost in **sorrow**...



...looking for **purpose**.



MOVE YOURSELF,
OLD MAN--

--GET OUT OF
THE WAY!

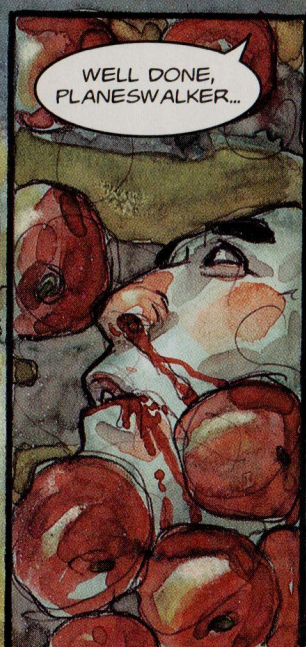


Gerra draws **mana**.

But she can't **stop**
the **momentum**.

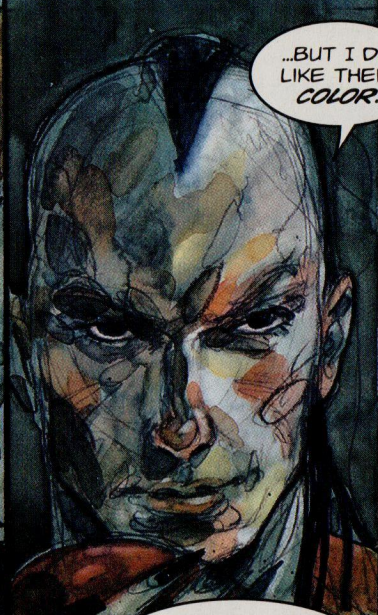


WELL DONE,
PLANESWALKER...





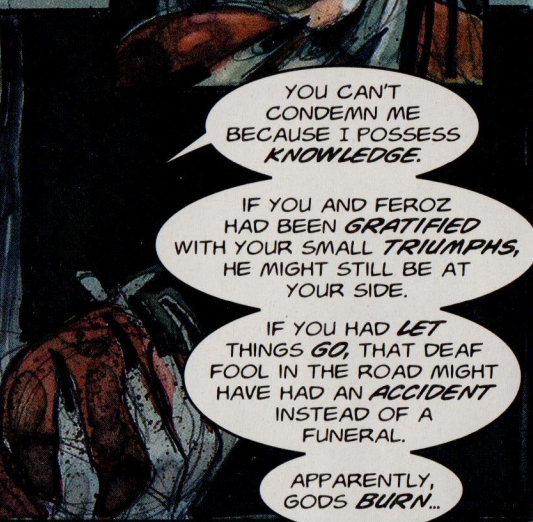
...IF DREADFULLY
TRAGIC! I DON'T
NORMALLY EAT
THESE...



...BUT I DO
LIKE THEIR
COLOR.



DON'T PLAY
THE **SERPENT**
WITH ME,
SENGIR!



YOU CAN'T
CONDEMN ME
BECAUSE I POSSESS
KNOWLEDGE.

IF YOU AND FEROZ
HAD BEEN **GRATIFIED**
WITH YOUR SMALL **TRIUMPHS**,
HE MIGHT STILL BE AT
YOUR SIDE.

IF YOU HAD **LET**
THINGS **GO**, THAT DEAF
FOOL IN THE ROAD MIGHT
HAVE HAD AN **ACCIDENT**
INSTEAD OF A
FUNERAL.

APPARENTLY,
GODS **BURN**...

Serra's **response** is a grave for Feroz, near
to where he first came into the world.

A monument of **runes** that tell
of the **good** they tried to do.



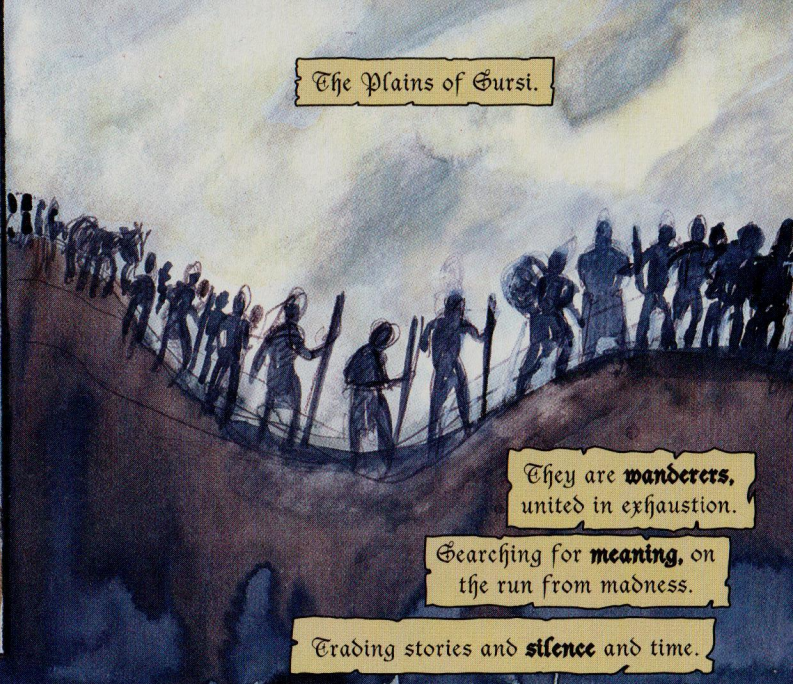
I WILL MISS
THE **SOUND** OF
YOUR VOICE...



...THE **TOUCH** OF
YOUR LIPS...



Gerra will never return.



The Plains of Gursi.

They are wanderers,
united in exhaustion.

Searching for meaning, on
the run from madness.

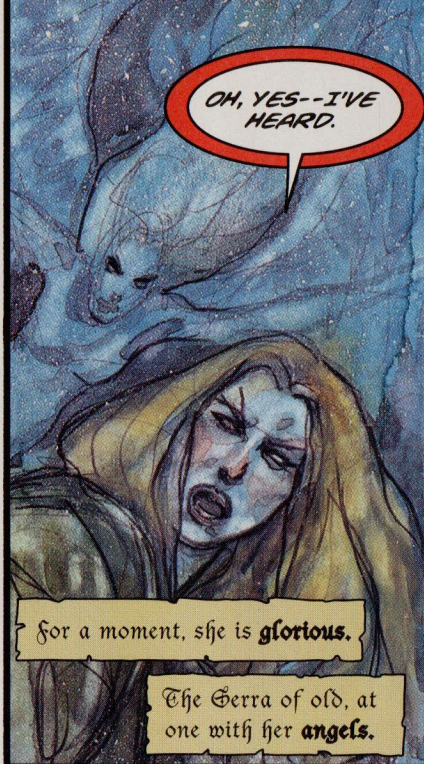
Trading stories and silence and time.





I'LL SOONER DIE!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE **CROSSIN'** MISSUM! EVER HEAR OF A **PLANESWALKER**?



OH, YES--I'VE HEARD.

For a moment, she is **glorious**.

The Serra of old, at one with her **angels**.



GLORY...

The visions **burn** into Brother Angus...

He has found his **cause**...



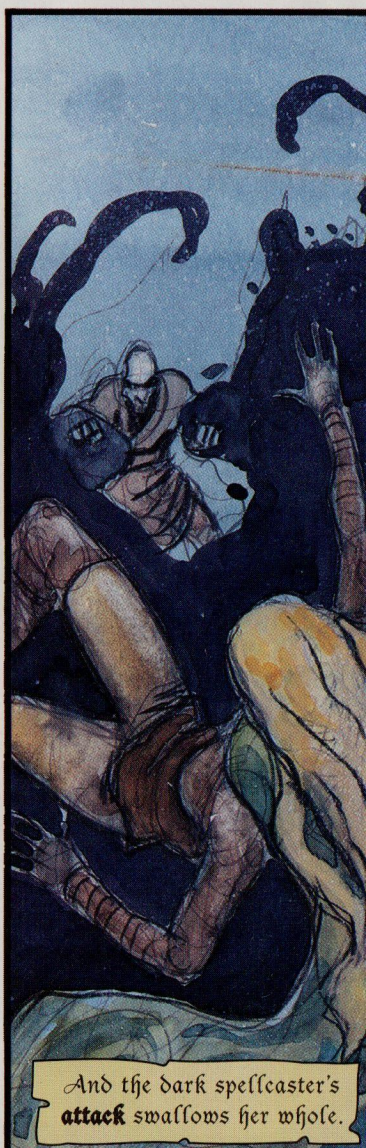
NO.

I DON'T WANT THIS CONTEST.



HELLO AGAIN, FERROZ.

Serra lets her white mana glide **back** into the land.



And the dark spellcaster's **attack** swallows her whole.



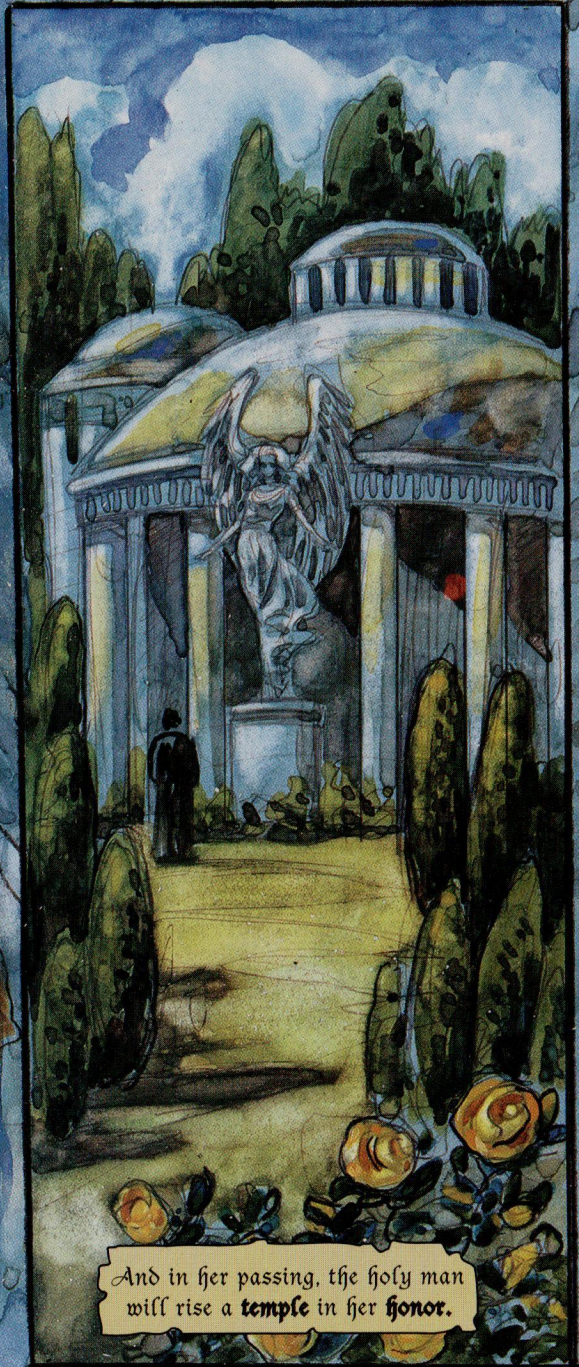
ENOUGH!




HAVE YOU NO
RESPECT FOR THE
DIVINE?




Angus makes Serra's final days
as **peaceful** as they may be.



And in her passing, the holy man
will rise a **temple** in her honor.

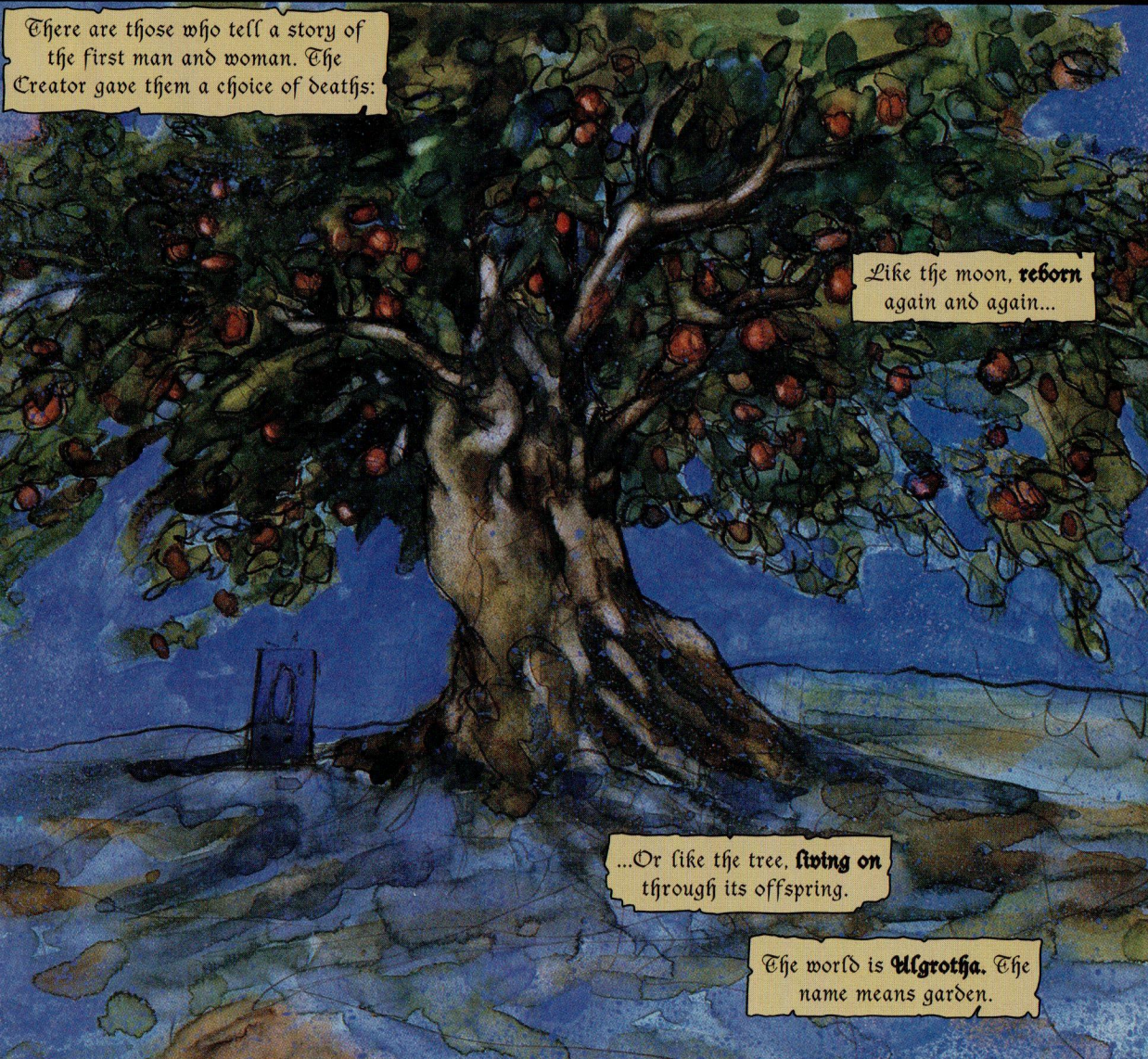


REST *EASY*,
PLANESWALKER,
YOU AND
YOUR MATE.



I COMMEND
YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
AND IN A WAY... I *ENVY*
YOU YOUR *SLEEP*.

There are those who tell a story of
the first man and woman. The
Creator gave them a choice of deaths:



Like the moon, *reborn*
again and again...

...Or like the tree, *living on*
through its offspring.

The world is *Ulgrotha*. The
name means garden.

HOMELANDS

Hello! My name is Scott Hungerford, and I'm one of the designers of the **Homelands™** expansion, along with Kyle Namvar (who's also head of the Customer Service Department at Wizards of the Coast). I started working for Wizards of the Coast as a Customer Service Representative about sixteen months ago, but Kyle and I first got the idea for **Homelands** some nine months before that, on a beautiful sunny afternoon amidst the chaos of Wade Racine's living room.

We were sitting on the floor sorting out **Antiquities™** cards for the Customer Service Reps to use while they answered calls and letters, when the conversation came around to whether we should try to design our own set. In all seriousness, I'm sure that everyone who plays Magic talks about this at some point, but when we started talking about where Baron Sengir came from and whether there was a Hurlloon Vale, it all came together in a flash. A name? **Homelands**—an epic about the concept of home and the cultures of some of the most unique creatures in the universe of Dominia.

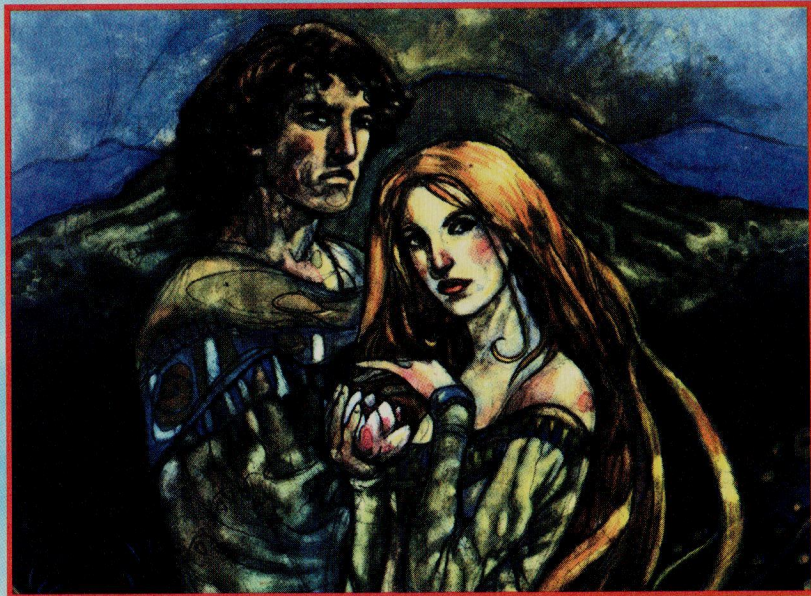
Admittedly, there have been a lot of changes since then. The setting for the **Homelands** expansion has been placed on a separate plane, far removed from the locations of the previous card sets. We focused more on new cultures than old, but still kept enough of the old flavor to answer questions about the origins of the Sengir Vampires, or whether there are other Minotaurs inhabiting Dominia. But the feel and flavor of that first day is still there, even with all the changes and the chaos that have occurred throughout the design process.

Kyle did the lion's share of the rules for **Homelands**, and I did the bulk of the set's story work, but we crossed over into each other's territories many times. We frequently spent hours together theorizing about the philosophy and characters of **Homelands**; at other times we hashed out rules and card ideas while we sat on his front stoop watching the sun go down on the horizon. Over the course of the last two years, especially in the final editing and production process, well over a hundred people have lent their talent, skill, and expertise to the set—and quite a bit of humor and creativity as well. **Homelands**, in my mind and heart, is really Wizards of the Coast's set, and belongs to every last person who has struggled to see it through to completion, even while coping with a company undergoing exponential growth.

Over the course of the year that I worked in Customer Service, I also traveled all over the country to gaming conventions as a rep for Wizards of the Coast. I played a lot of "gun-slinger" Magic during my tours, taking on all challengers with the somewhat decent decks I put together. (By the way, while I'm not anywhere near the strongest Magic player out there, I'm not the weakest, either. Still, I must have played about two thousand games of Magic at those cons, and I only won about a quarter of those. This is mainly because I don't own any really expensive cards, I hate playing against control decks, and I'm not especially good at blocking 128/1 mountainwalking, firebreathing Kobolds.)

Getting to my point, I talked to a lot of you out there over that year, real people in the real world who had concerns about our game, and comments about what they like and don't like about the cards and rules. Two thousand people may be only a small fraction of those of you who play Magic, but a lot of your comments made a sizable impact in shaping the ideas and flavor of **Homelands**. Because of that, the set is partly dedicated to everyone who was willing to talk with me while playing a game or two of Magic—and who was willing to deal with my half-brained antics as I played my Sorceress Queen/Transmutation decks against competitors who wiped the floor with my Cyclopean Mummies!

In the end, I think we've got a pretty strong set in **Homelands**. It's been a long, strange trip to this point, and I'm glad I had the chance to meet so many of you along



the way. I hope you enjoy what we've done—not just the madness Kyle and I have created, but the set that all of the WotC staff have shaped over the last year.

Homelands: The Story

Homelands is about the human condition. In a world where the warfare of planeswalkers has not been felt in centuries, the stories and legends have slowly turned away from the horrors of destruction and violence of yesteryear to the affairs of real, tangible people. In this world, it is a time of heroes, one where humanity has risen from the coals to reinstate the process of story and tale, and to live lives of true purpose. That boy sweeping out the An-Havva Inn, or the young woman who mourns in the Sengir village for her dead mother—they are the stuff of heroes. Perhaps their ignorance makes them naïve by our modern standards, but it is also what makes them strong, and it does not dilute their spirit. They live in a time of peace, a burgeoning age amongst chaos.

Not having knowledge of the world-wandering planeswalkers who live beyond the edge of their existence, the people of **Homelands** are perhaps the most powerful beings alive, for they have hope, and with that hope comes possibility. They believe that they can do anything, because no one has told them differently. With the time that I've spent dreaming of the fierce folk of An-Havva, or talking with an imagined Abbot about matters of Aysen church and state, I've learned that the core of this story, and that of the human condition, emerges out of the freedom to think and dream, to create anew and let your mind wander though unexplored places. There is a little of the Baron in each of us, as well as of the crooning of the Minotaurs, and the soft silence that manifests itself when Serra and Feroz look into each other's eyes. With aspects of faerie tale and psychological archetype, **Homelands** is about what lies beneath the surface of our consciousness, what drives us to pursue our goals and desires against all odds and possibilities. What you hold in front of you is one piece of an epic cycle which has been building for hundreds of years and now is at a climax. With it, we give

you neither easy salvation nor absolute doom. The scene is set for the process of story, and the small aspects of life and fate will cause the world to shift and change dramatically within the next few seasons. Both this comic and the **Homelands** expansion set realize that sense of apprehension, and it will be your own dreams and imaginations that define for you the final months leading to Baron Sengir's success or failure in his conquering of this world. Know well that there may be answers and a conclusion presented someday,

but for now, I think I'll leave you to come to your own conclusions.

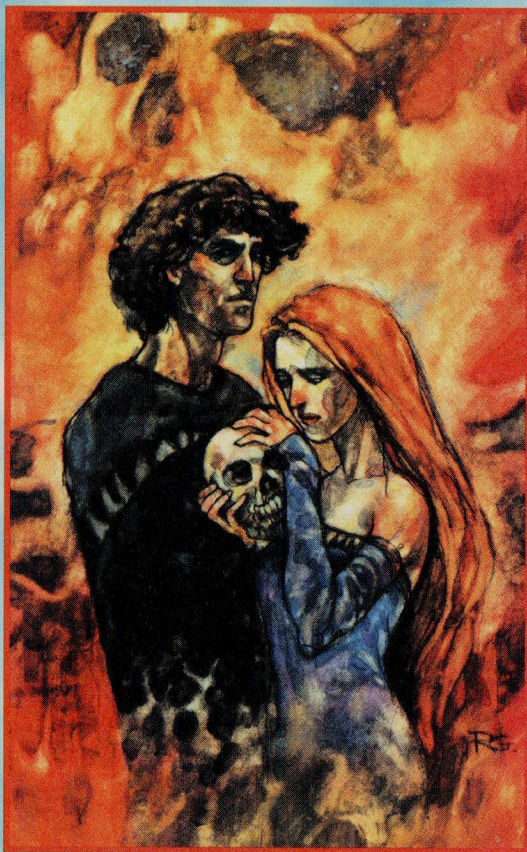
The story of **Homelands** is dedicated to Gordon Beck, Stephanie Coontz, York Wong, Sandra Simon, Janet Ott, and everyone else who pushed me from conformity to uniqueness in my college years, and to all of my friends and family who have allowed me to ruin my health and sanity in pursuit of this vision. My gift to you is an evening of conversation with Feroz and Serra, whose enlightenment and education stem from those long seminars that I used to fear like garlic, silver, and streams of running water.

My thanks also to D. G. Chichester, who was the first person apart from Kyle Namvar to argue the philosophies of Baron Sengir and **Homelands** with me, and to Pete Venters for

his perseverance even in the face of my absolute lack of common sense and habit of missing perfectly obvious facts on a daily basis. My appreciation to Steve Bishop for all the work he did for this set, and for putting up with my "self-unsummoning Narwhals." My thanks to Rebecca Guay, who has breathed life and paint into people I feared would only live in my mind's eye, even as she surmounted difficulties with the determination of a champion. Chandler tips his hat to all of you, and slips off into the night to make mischief anew.

Feroz lives!

Carpe Diem (in a grim sort of way),
Scott C. Hungerford



HOMELANDS

←.....TIMELINE.....→

(1 generation = about 20 human years)

After the Great Destruction 1st Generation (600 years ago)

- The few creatures and beings who actually survived the final conflict between the Tolgath and the Ancients are those who were in the vicinity of the Rift, and thus did not have their life-force drained from them by the planet as a result of the Apocalypse Chime. There are nomadic human cultures appearing on the plains, forming from a tattered cross-section of the summoned people who were stranded here by the planewalkers. Goblins and Orcs have started to make their homes in the Koskun Mountains and are digging through the rich soil in search of ore and gold as well as inhabitable caverns. The world is going through serious changes; violent storms are a constant, as are unpredictable weather patterns and seasons.

3rd Generation (560 years ago)

- The beings stranded on this unfamiliar world continue to adapt to their new homes and environments. Many have given up on rescue and now consider the oasis, surrounded as it is by a deadly wasteland, to be their true home. Tales of the great war have become little more than stories for their grandchildren.

4th to 10th Generations (540 to 420 years ago)

- The stories of the great war are now hundreds of years old and are degenerating with every telling, as there is no sin-

gle widespread written language. Occasionally, a lone planeswalker will briefly appear, only to steal a variety of the inhabitants away.

12th Generation (380 years ago)

- A colony of Dwarves from another plane are utilizing a stable subterranean planar gate in their excavations for minerals and gems. One such expedition arrives in the depths of the mountains, where they soon establish an underground city, whose name translates roughly as "New Freedom." It is a beautiful place filled with Dwarven artifacts, many designed to allow the Dwarves to exist in comfort in the depths of the planet; the wealth of nearby ore allows the city to flourish. Eventually, the Dwarves dig to the surface and begin to build a great stone castle overlooking the salt marsh, both as an outpost and a tribute to their success. They are not discovered by any other culture and are unaware of the history of the world.

- Two planeswalkers duel in the swamps near the uncompleted castle. When the duel is over, an ancient Vampire by the name of Baron Sengir is stranded when his wizard is banished.

- The Dwarves begin to explore their world by constructing half a dozen sailing vessels. During their travels, they contact many cultures; however, those that venture far into the open seas are never heard from again.

- When the first seafaring Dwarves return, they find that most of their kin who stayed behind to work on the castle have been slain or turned into undead by a trespassing Vampire. Despite their efforts and experience, they cannot regain the castle from Baron Sengir's clutches. The Baron pushes back the assault by raiding deep into the mines and overwhelming the unprepared Dwarves there. During one such episode, Sengir captures the Dwarven King's daughter, Irini, and turns her into one of his Vampires. The Dwarves, beaten and demoralized, escape into the marshes and set out to build a new community far



from the blight of the Vampire lord. These survivors swear a life-oath of vengeance and strike the knowledge of the subterranean planar gate from their histories.

- Serra, an exploring planeswalker, arrives. Although she herself is temperamental and impulsive, she encourages peace between the various plains nomads and the foundation of the city-state of Aysen. She takes on the role of protector over the people of Aysen, a role that eventually grows into a form of godhood.

13th Generation (360 years ago)



- The Dwarves learn that many of the beings who live on this world have little idea that there are worlds beyond their own. These humans and humanoids, with such short life spans, have either forgotten or mislearned

the reasons why they are here and what has happened to the world in the past. Still following their life-oath to ensure that the people of this world don't learn of the gate to the Dwarven world, the Dwarves set out on a greater quest: to uncover and reassemble the fragmented history of this place.

17th Generation (280 years ago)

- Baron Sengir sends Vampires and creatures on raids against Aysen; his intention is not to conquer the populace of Aysen, but to instill fear in them and erode their morale.

19th Generation (240 years ago)

- Feroz, a planeswalker who despises the generally accepted use of sentient creatures in duels, arrives and encounters both Serra and Sandruu, a Minotaur born with the planeswalking spark.

- The Baron senses the presence of the planeswalkers and moves to minimize the danger they represent to his plans.

20th Generation (220 years ago)

- Feroz founds the Wizards' School on the Floating Isle to teach the basic foundations of magic to the people of this world.

- Aysen Abbey is built in the city of Onella, in Aysen.

- On another plane, Ravidel leads Taysir to discover the budding romance between Sandruu and Kristina. Taysir pursues Sandruu to Ulgrotha, the Homelands.

- Feroz duels Taysir, after Sandruu is banished to another plane.

- Feroz and Serra build their home. Feroz casts a Ban over the world, a spell to protect it from outside plunder.

22nd Generation (180 years ago)

- With the aid of one of the Baron's Dark Tomes, a corrupt Wizard Savant on the Floating Isle transforms Eron the Relentless, a common thief, into an immortal.

29th Generation (40 years ago)

- After an enlightening visit from Ihsan, a lord and a Paladin of Serra, Baron Sengir calls a halt to the sporadic attacks against Aysen. Without a common enemy, the peoples of Aysen begin to turn on each other.

30th Generation (20 years ago)

- Feroz dies in a laboratory accident. Unknown to Serra, his death causes the Ban over the Homelands to begin a slow deterioration.

- Serra departs, never to return. She is killed some time later by a planeswalker who covets her wedding ring, believing it to be a powerful artifact.

31st Generation Present Day

- The Ban weakens to the point that planeswalkers are able to breach its wards and enter the world of the Homelands.



A Brief History of Dominaria

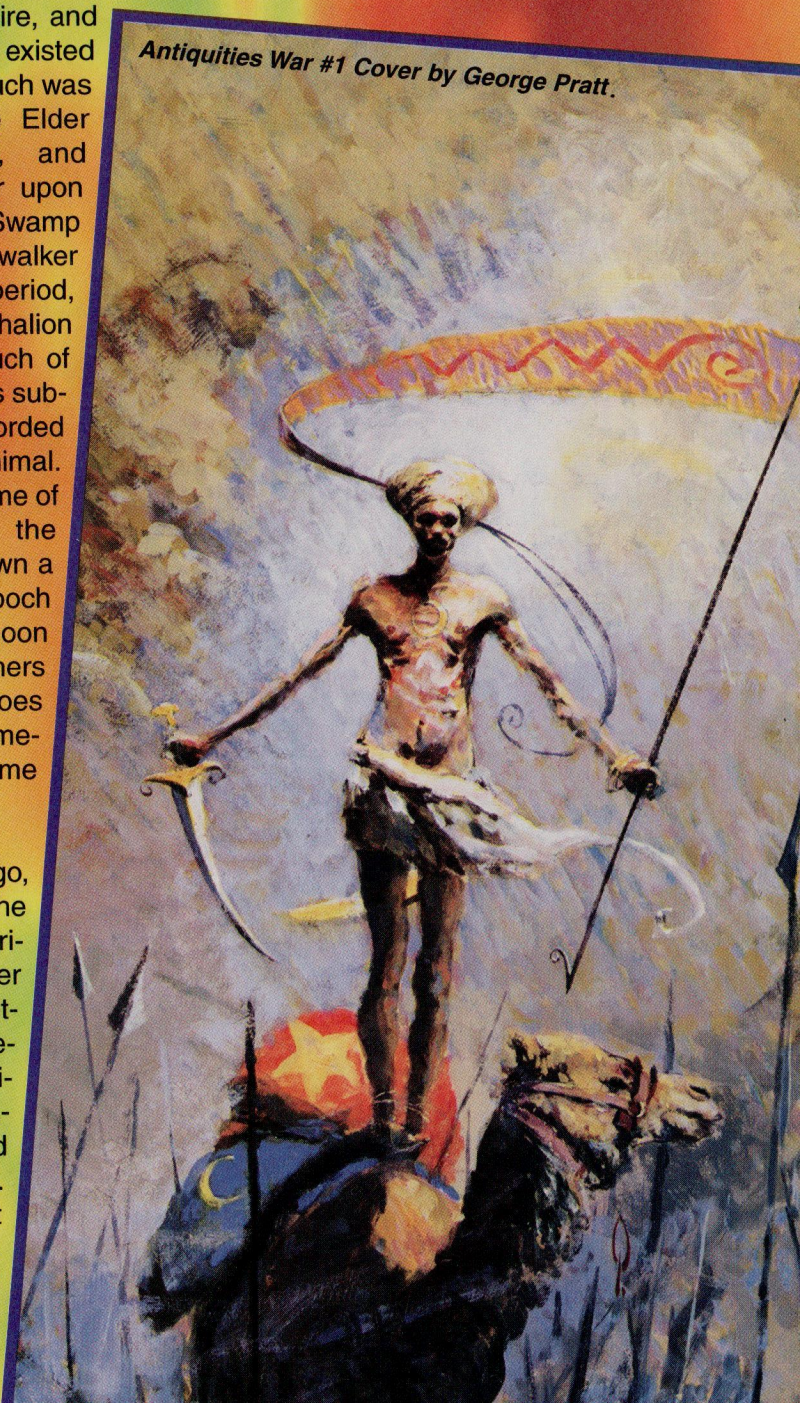
Dominaria, the world at which dozens of planes intersect, has a long and exciting history. From the long-lived perspective of planeswalkers, however, there are several major defining events that stand out.

Because Dominaria is a world with many cultures, there is no single calendar or way of telling the year. Different lands have their own ways of marking the passage of time. As a result, the timeline below is uncertain at best, but has been assembled with the aid of the planeswalker Taysir.

After the fall of the Thran Empire, and before the Brothers War, there existed a pristine time on Dominaria. Such was the time of Legends, where Elder Dragons were worshipped, and Dakkon Blackblade made war upon the forces of Sol'kanar the Swamp King. It is said that the planeswalker Kristina was born during this period, and the lineage of clan Carthalion can be traced to this time. Much of what occurred during this age is subject to interpretation, as recorded history has thusfar been minimal. Some attribute the end of the time of Legends to the advent of the Brothers War. Others have drawn a link between the end of this epoch and the coming of the "Null" moon into Dominaria's orbit. Still others say that many of the great heroes of Legend still exist, either somewhere on Dominaria, or on some other faraway plane.

About four thousand years ago, the Brothers War occurred on the continent of Terisiare. This terrible conflict between the artificer brothers Urza and Mishra resulted in great advances in the creation and usage of magical artifacts, but the massive devastation from their conflict resulted in severe climactic shifts. Unknown to any but the most powerful, the effects of the Brothers War reached beyond the world of Dominaria and into the multiverse of Dominia.

Antiquities War #1 Cover by George Pratt.



In time, Dominaria and eleven of its neighboring planes became locked together in a Shard that prevented both entry into and exit from this small set of worlds.

As the decades passed, the era known as the Dark Age began. The aftermath of the Brothers War was a time of ignorance, fear, and persecution. Magic in any form was opposed and eradicated, whether beneficial or not. The survivors of the magical apocalypse scattered into small communities, leaving only a few viable cities remaining. The populace turned to religion for succor, and the religions then turned against the spellwielders, purporting them to be evil. (This same fanaticism was inflicted upon Sarpadia by zealots such as Farrel; his blind hatred for anything magical sped the Empires to their doom.) The origin of Tevesh Szat can be traced to this time in Sarpadia's history.

Fallen Empires Cover by Alex Malev.



Ice Age #3 Cover by Charles Vess.

Only as the Ice Age took its grip upon Dominaria did the mages return to prominence, as every resource was needed to aid in the race to survive the encroaching cold.

Two thousand years into this terrible Ice Age, the survivors of the city of Storgard, by then buried beneath a glacier, had become strong enough to have built the nation of Kjeldor. Their struggle to survive, however, was hindered by the undead forces of the necromancer Lim-Dûl and his masters Tevash Szat and Leshrac. Late in the fighting, the forest goddess Freyalise (actually a planeswalker) magically reversed the course of the Ice Age, and the glaciers began to recede far ahead of the natural schedule.

It is now the present day on Dominaria. The Ice Age is a distant memory, and the many races continue in their struggles for dominance and survival against a backdrop of constant interference from the vastly powerful planeswalkers.

TAYSIR'S TALE

Taysir is a most unusual being, born of not one world but five. These five incarnations each represented one of the colors of mana. Through the machinations of the Sorceress Queen Nailah, the individual Taysirs were brought together, resulting in a unique and powerful being with the knowledge of five men. This unusual birthing propelled Taysir into the ranks of the planeswalkers.

As is the nature of planeswalkers, Taysir spent many centuries in solitude, only encountering other beings when he required them as resources for his plans and machinations. He roamed far across the multiverse of Dominia, rarely engaging other planeswalkers and knowing little of how his powers ranked alongside theirs.

Taysir had the misfortune of being caught in the forming Shard that was being generated out of Dominaria, even as he had set about studying the epic poetry that was found in the aftermath of the Brothers War. Trapped in only a dozen planes, he could no longer postpone the inevitable contact with others of his kind. Taysir's first encounter was with Kristina of the Woods, a mage of indeterminate age and beguiling wisdom. They frequently traveled the Shard together over the centuries, exploring their vast prison and searching for an escape route. Taysir's essays from this period are viewed as some of the root documents of many civilizations' accounts of prehistory.

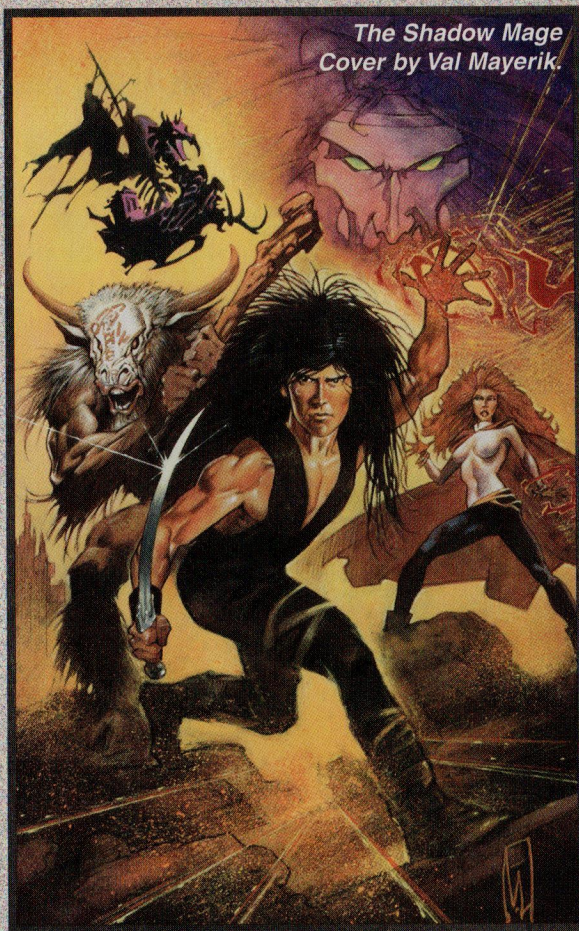
Taysir and Kristina's combined strength allowed them to survive their conflicts with many other similarly trapped-planeswalkers. However, they were forced to confront some of the worst of them at the Summit of the Shard, conducted by Faralyn upon Dominaria's Null Moon. There, with the aid of Freyalise and a then innocent Ravidel, they battled Tevesh Szat and Leshrac. The crafty Faralyn used the unleashed energies of this battle to

escape to the plane of Shandalar, hotly pursued by Leshrac. Ravidel was killed in the clash, but Kristina and Taysir saw fit to resurrect him, a gift that was not well-received by the spellsquire. Meanwhile, Freyalise beat Tevesh Szat, flooding Dominaria with mana and initiating the breaking of the Shard.

With the entire multiverse again open to them, Taysir spoke to Kristina of the desires he'd been hiding from her. He had fallen in love with her, his constant traveling companion, and he wished for them to

be married. Kristina, however, needed solitude, a time to selflessly reattune herself with nature; she had no choice but to turn him away. Taysir, heartbroken, sped into the void, where he threw himself into obsessive exploration. Eventually, when this was no longer sufficient to distract him from his heartache, he turned to the pursuit of vengeance against Leshrac and Tevesh Szat.

Occasionally, Taysir—spurred by his new spellsquire, Ravidel—would return to spy



The Shadow Mage
Cover by Val Mayerik.

upon Kristina. It was on one such visit that he discovered she had a new companion, a Minotaur by the name of Sandruu. Enraged with jealousy, he ambushed the Minotaur, severely wounding him and sending him blindly back to his home plane, Ulgrotha...the Homelands. Giving chase, Taysir banished Sandruu to a transient plane from which there was no easy return. Feroz, having witnessed the last part of the episode, fought Taysir on the Minotaur's home ground. Taysir was defeated primarily by his own arrogance rather than Feroz's spellcasting.

But Taysir was not dead. The Ancestors of the Minotaurs held Taysir's spirit in their realm, and informed their living kin to carefully store the planeswalker's body in a sealed cave. For two hundred years, the Anaba Ancestors soothed the tortured Taysir's spirit, attuning him once again with his five souls. Their teachings made Taysir more reflective, and showed him the error of his arrogance. When they were satisfied that he was ready, they returned him to his body. However, his flesh had not endured the centuries well. It had neither rotted nor aged, but it had withered. Although he could have changed it, Taysir chose to retain that form as a reminder of all that had happened and all that he had learned.

Craving solitude once more, Taysir returned to his scholastic pursuits and began to map the Homelands. While working on the section that covered the Great Wood, he found a child called Daria, abandoned there by parents who feared her odd powers. Taysir took the girl as his apprentice, recognizing the spark within her that identified her as a planeswalker. As opposed to the mutual bitterness of his relationship with Ravidel, Taysir thrived on Daria's inherent goodness and innocence, and he treated her as a beloved daughter. One day soon, he will once again travel Dominia, with Daria at his side.

Taysir is fully aware that much of what he wrought before his stay with the Ancestors will eventually return to haunt him. Even now, Ravidel is marauding across the world of Dominaria in Taysir's name — threatening Kristina, and her own young apprentice, the Shadow Mage. The years ahead will be Taysir's most challenging, ever. Soon he may find he'll have to make enormous sacrifices in order to atone.

Arabian Nights #1 Cover by Mike Dringenberg.



DESIGNERS' CHOICE

HOMELANDS CREATORS UNVEIL THEIR FAVORITE NEW CARDS

Kyle's Picks

• Didgeridoo

This card allows you to summon Minotaurs directly out of your hand as a fast effect, which is especially useful during the fast effect phase after your opponent has declared which creatures are going to attack. You can respond by using Didgeridoo to bring a Minotaur into play and then use that Minotaur as a blocker!

• Broken Visage

This spell causes one of your opponent's attacking creatures to be buried and then brings into play a Shadow token with power and toughness equal to the power and toughness of the creature you just buried. Even though you have to bury the Shadow token at the end of the turn, it still lends a note of fear when your opponent's biggest creature vanishes and you block with one just as large!



• Veldrane

This Legend is Baron Sengir's most loyal servant and is one of the few black creatures in Magic to have forestwalk. Even though it loses strength when it forestwalks, it's a potent crea-

ture to use against forest decks. (As a side note, it's still questioned whether Veldrane is a real living being, or a special undead of some kind.)

• Jinx

The possibilities of this spell are very amusing, as you can use it to change any

one basic land in play into another type of basic land until the end of the turn. The uses for this are too numerous to mention here, but it certainly allows for your landwalkers to do some serious harm, and is also good for wreaking havoc towards the end of a duel, when every last bit of mana counts.

• Primal Order

This is the balancing card of the Homelands expansion, sounding a note of fear in the hearts of players who use only non-basic lands in their decks. This enchantment causes each player, during his or her upkeep, to take 1 damage for each non-basic land they have in play.

• Joven's Ferrets and Mammoth Harness

These spells show that it's really hard to catch a Ferret, and even harder to catch a levitating Mammoth! Joven's Ferrets gets +0/+2 when it attacks, and any creature that blocks it doesn't untap as normal during its next untap phase. Mammoth Harness causes a target creature to lose flying, and all creatures that are blocking or blocked by the creature with Mammoth Harness on it gain first strike until the end of the turn.

• Baron Sengir

Baron Sengir is a 5/5 Vampire and Legend with flying and the ability to regenerate other Vampires, and that gets +2/+2 whenever it damages a creature that goes to the graveyard that same turn. While the Baron is definitely a nemesis-type character in the Homelands saga, he feels that he is by no means evil—just different.

• Eron the Relentless

This Legend is the King of the Goblins in Koskun Keep and is the man who orga-



from any damage short of Disintegration and burial. The original flavor text Scott and I envisioned for Eron was, "What?! You again?!"

• Folk of An-Havva and Dwarven Traders

Folk of An-Havva and Dwarven Traders may not be the strongest cards in the set, but they are my favorites, as they add a little more theme and flavor to decks and offer a few more possible personalities for my decks. Folk of An-Havva is a green 1/1 creature that gets +0/+2 when it blocks; Dwarven Traders is a red 1/1 creature.

Scott's Picks

• Death Speakers and Aysen Bureaucrats



whose power is no greater than 2—government red tape in action.

• Samite Alchemist

Samite alchemy is a profession that evolved from the first Samite Healers, who survived the climactic battle

nized the treaty between the city-states of Aysen and the Goblin families of the K o s k u n Mountains. As a card, Eron the Relentless is designed to just keep attacking, as it has the ability to regenerate

between the Ancients and the Tolgath six centuries ago. The Samite Alchemists continued the traditional healing practices, eventually moving from the Healers' spiritual approach to a more scientific one. The Alchemist can tap to prevent up to 4 damage to a creature you control, but the creature does not untap as normal during your next untap phase.

• Anaba Minotaurs

The Anaba Minotaurs are a curious group, isolationist and wanting to keep their mountain home secret from outsiders. Occasionally, one of the Anaba, usually a young Minotaur seeking adventure, will leave this home to go out and



explore the world. Many of these roamers end up in Koskun Keep and are quickly corrupted by the greed, wealth, and politics of that den of villainy. Some become pit-fighters, others personal

bodyguards to merchants, Goblin families, or even Eron the Relentless (if they can pass his deadly entrance exams). The main reason they're designated "Bodyguards" instead of "Minotaurs" on the summon line of their cards is that in revoking their ancestral heritage, they lost touch with their true selves and no longer gain strength or wisdom from the spells of their Minotaur kin.

• Retribution

According to rumor, this spell represents one of Eron the Relentless's many severe disciplinary practices. It's said that once, Eron was so displeased with a pair of his lieutenants that he had them brought in by Anaba Bodyguards and laid out on the chopping block, while a pair of their loved ones was dragged in to watch their execution. Just before the axe was to fall, Eron asked the doomed soldiers to choose: watch their loved ones be tor-

tured first and be beheaded themselves afterwards, or be tortured and disfigured and then watch their loved ones given over to Eron's best executioner. While no one really knows if the tale is true, it is common knowledge that Eron's version of justice is a little skewed. Of course, that's probably because he's been assassinated at least two dozen times over the course of his kingship and is no longer quite as forgiving as he was in the first years of his rule.

• Hungry Mist

This is a ravenous creature from the depths of the Great Wood near An-Havva. Many of the people who live near the forest's edge keep their children indoors after dark, for more than a few families have lost loved ones to these predatory creatures. Sunlight or a bonfire will keep Hungry Mist away, but a lantern or torch attracts them in droves. This beastie is a 6/2 creature for two green mana and two colorless, with an upkeep cost of two green mana.

• Labyrinth Minotaurs

These monsters are not easy to find, and then they're usually guarding the treasure troves of wizards and planeswalkers. They don't age, don't sleep, and generally enjoy conversing with (and then eating) only those who are trying to thread their mazes. They go to great pains to create mazes and traps to fool and injure the unwary and take pleasure in sealing adventurers in a dead end and listening to their desperate pleas for release. Whether they are sorcerous experiments or creatures left behind by the Tolgath is still uncertain, but when they are found, they are best avoided and left alone.



• Sea Trolls

These hungry, undersea creatures eat a lot of things that live in the sea, but

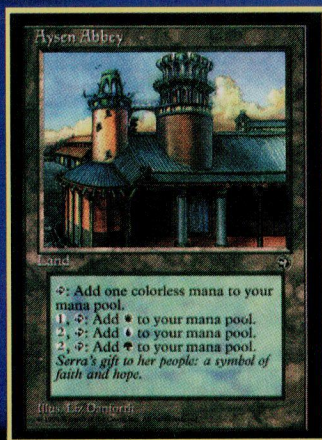
they enjoy nothing more than consuming Merfolk whenever they can catch them. Sea Trolls will usually be found just on the outskirts of a Merfolk settlement and will prey on the sentries and remote villages until the Merfolk gather together a force large enough to drive them away. Strong, cunning, and able to travel both above and below the surface of the sea, Sea Trolls are as much a menace to sailors as to Merfolk.

• Black Carriage

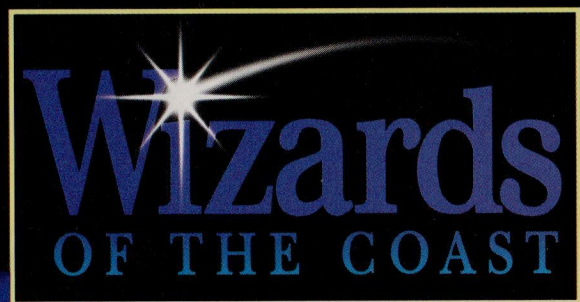
The Black Carriage is Baron Sengir's personal vehicle, used primarily to travel along the roads and bridges of his Barony. He often picks a villager to act as his driver, and at the end of the ride, the kind and caring Baron feeds the unlucky villager to the carnivorous steeds that pull his Carriage, as reward for their good labor.

• "Tri-Lands"

Tri-lands are lands that change colorless mana into three different kinds of mana, which enables three- and four-color decks to be created without much difficulty. However, these lands are affected by Primal Order, so they're no safer than dual lands or Mazes of Ith against the ravages of the Autumn Willow.



Although these lands aren't fantastic for speed, they do provide versatility and allow for a number of deck concepts to be useful that are otherwise too unwieldy or unbalanced.



HOMELANDS

World Overview and Story Themes

WHITE

• A Common Enemy

The spirit of the peoples of Aysen is fueled by hatred for Baron Sengir. For generations, the Baron sent his Vampires and foul creations to plague the fields and farms of the Aysen countryside. His Vampires were usually driven away or destroyed—they were never numerous enough to actually take control of any part of Aysen—but conquest was not the Baron's goal. Instead, he strove to create an atmosphere of fear throughout Aysen. After an unusual confrontation with a Serra Paladin by the name of Ihsan, however, the Baron realized that the citizens of Aysen were bonding through their common fear of the nightly terrors rather than crumbling into despair. Therefore, he ceased to order these attacks, and now it is a rare thing to see one of his creatures anywhere in Aysen. As the Baron theorized, with no common enemy to bring them together, the citizens' petty rivalries began to grow. The Baron is an immortal, and thirty years to him passes as does the blink of an eye. Waiting a few years isn't going to trouble him, but it could lead to the downfall of the Aysen culture without any effort on his part, which to him is a worthy gamble.

• Death Speakers

Death Speakers are evidence of the main schism in the Aysen culture. A number of disillusioned members of the populace have begun to take to practicing minor divination and spirit-summoning. These people generally are doing no harm to anyone, including themselves; they're only trying a little future-reading and interpreting odd occurrences as divine signs and portents. However, rumors that they have the ability to summon the spirits of the dead and make them answer questions about those still living really unnerve those Bureaucrats in power who have secrets that need to be kept. With the Baron no longer a constant threat, the citizenship of Aysen is beginning to turn on the Death Speakers. Recently, the Serra Inquisitors have been conducting armed

raids on the homes of Death Speakers, putting those that they catch on trial and almost always convicting them of corruption. The Samites are well aware of the situation and are doing their best to avoid getting involved, but a number of Samite Alchemists are harboring Death Speakers in their homes or are being dragged into the conflict in other ways. So far, no one has died or been seriously injured, though the city rumors would have it that an entire den of Death Speakers has mastered the art of fabricating Skeletons, Zombies, and other undead creatures. Still, it's only a matter of time before some minor incident sends the entire citizenship of Aysen into a fevered mob hunt.

• Serra's Absence

Aysen Abbey was built in Serra's honor years ago, and the Aviary was established as a temple to her and a place for her to visit. The last time that she appeared in Aysen, however, was some twenty years ago, and much of the citizenry's faith has begun to wane. They believe that Serra has abandoned them. Without her annual visits, and without the oppression of the Baron's influence, the people are starting to lose their convictions, and even their sense of purpose. The Abbey Gargoyles, Serra's gift to the city of Onella so long ago, are still doing their duties, which in the eyes of most of the populace means that Serra has not forsaken them entirely. Still, while she has been gone for five or ten years at a time before, she's never been gone for twenty, and the Abbey Matrons are starting to have their hands full quashing rumors of her departure. Her absence weighs heavily on the people of Aysen, adding to the already high tension level in the city-state and fueling the fervor against the Death Speakers.

• Hazduhr the Abbot

Traditionally, when an Abbot dies, Serra walks among the peoples of Onella to choose a new spiritual and cultural leader from the crowds. The current Abbot, Huzduhr, is growing increasingly ill in his advancing years and is unlikely to live more than a few seasons longer. A number of people believe that when he dies, Serra will not appear to choose his successor. This would cause complete chaos among the citizenship, inevitably with dire consequences. The Abbot's knowledge and insight make him an invaluable leader, but as his age incapacitates him, he is rapidly becoming a symbol of the spiritual and societal bankruptcy that is growing within Aysen.

BLUE

• The Wizards' School

Reveka, a very determined Sea Dwarf, is the Wizard Savant who currently acts as Director of the Wizards' School—a very precarious position. If the Wizards' School does not soon become a political power, it is in danger of being usurped by either of its "allies" at best, or being economically destroyed by Eron's influence at worst. The only way that the Wizards' School will survive is through subtle control over the rest of the world, taken piece by piece. The Wizard Savant has no intention of seizing dictatorial control anywhere, but she realizes that she needs to have spies and contacts everywhere. She has no choice: she must play a full-scale game of intrigue and try to keep the world from war at the same time. In her attempts to maintain this balance and gain a toehold in the political arena, Reveka is also quite conscious of the fact that the Wizard Attendants in the school have the right to challenge her for the Directorship, just as she challenged the old Director. If one of them wins such a duel, it could mean her exile, the fall of the Wizards' School, and the eruption of open war between Aysen and Baron Sengir.

• Reveka

The current Director of the Wizards' School and the highest-ranking Wizard Savant, Reveka is known for her determination and her ambition. She has a strong temper and a cunning mind. She wants to re-establish a good position for the Wizards' School among all of the cultures of the Homelands at nearly any cost, but trusts no one's council save her own. She really does have the best intentions, but her methods are manipulative, and she will do nearly anything to maintain the political alliances she has so carefully forged over the years. Reveka has spent time in the Bureaucratic chambers in Onella, sipped wine with Baron Sengir, and met with ambassadors from Koskun Keep to try to stop the feud between the Goblin wizards and her own people. Once, she even personally sailed a loaded frigate through the winter storms to ensure that the peoples of the port town of Kerselin had food to last until spring. In many ways, it's all part of a game, but that game is one that Reveka has to win.

• Magic

The limits of the empirical knowledge and theories of magic in the Homelands are constantly being tested by the students in the Wizards' School. As the Goblin wizards in Koskun gain strength, egotistical duels are becoming a constant on the beaches and in the foothills of the Koskun Mountains. Reveka is aware that her students often take long trips into Aysen, but she is not aware just how many have been sailing to the beaches of Koskun to bully the Goblins there, worsening the increasingly volatile political situation. No serious battles have happened yet, but that is likely just a matter of time.

BLACK

• Baron Sengir

An ancient and powerful Vampire by the name of Baron Sengir was summoned and abandoned on this world long ago by a planeswalker who lost a critical duel. The Baron slaughtered most of the Dwarves of a nearby castle and settled into his new residence accompanied by the few he'd enslaved as undead. No matter what the distressed Dwarves did to try to retake their castle, the Baron was simply too strong for them to defeat. In one of the raids, the Baron took the Dwarven king's daughter for his own, enchanting her mind so that she would love him rather than her father. Irini has since been his own loyal vampiric daughter, kept beautiful and young through the years by dark magics.

The Baron discovered two things of importance in the years following his arrival in this plane: that a hidden stairwell led from the throne room of his castle to a huge abandoned Dwarven city deep beneath the ground, and that within the underground city lay a gate that led to another world. Though the Baron knew little of true magic, he knew that gates like this are dangerous things, and that even if someone were prepared to enter one, there was no guarantee of return. None of the Vampires or undead servants he pushed through the gate ever returned, and none of his small magics were able to discern where the gate led. While he felt sure that this gate led back to some Dwarven metropolis, there was no way to know for certain save going through the gate himself. He searched through the city for clues, interrogated the Dwarves his servants

captured for him, and consulted divination devices from all over the Homelands, but to no avail—he was still confronted with a one-way gate to a place he knew nothing about. For this reason, he decided that he would only enter the gate fully prepared, with a sizable private army drawn from the world's inhabitants.

At one point, the Baron had his servants kidnap a variety of humans from Aysen, as well as a vessel carrying over thirty families on the way from Onella to the pioneer town of Kerselin. He had them set up a small village in the marshlands near his castle, and they lived under his influence and rule, making the best of the harsh living conditions. He certainly didn't need these short-lived humans, but keeping them under his influence had entertained him through the years, and turning their dead into handservants and Vampire warriors for his castle made them useful in a number of ways. To keep the villagers from attempting escape, the Baron ruled that if one person was caught fleeing the Barony, he would murder ten people in the individual's place and guarantee a cell in his dungeons for the one caught.

• Ihsan

Ihsan grew up in one of the small towns common on the plains of Aysen. When he was just coming of age, he had a series of dreams and visions of confronting "the Dark Baron" in Castle Sengir. Ihsan then devoted his life to becoming a member of the Serra Paladins, an order of knights devoted to the protection of the towns of Aysen and to the ultimate destruction of Baron Sengir. After serving as a Paladin for many years, Ihsan bravely journeyed to the Baron's castle and confronted the immortal. Much to Sengir's surprise, the Paladin knelt before him and begged that the Baron make him into a creature of eternity, that the Baron share his power and show Ihsan the true meaning of eternal life. Ihsan wanted to be a Vampire, to embrace the promise of power that the Baron could bestow upon him. The Baron agreed.

The Baron was an experienced immortal and knew not only that Ihsan wanted the power of eternal life only to use it to destroy him but also that Ihsan was mar-

tyring himself to darkness only for the good of the world he had left behind. ("The typical hero's journey to become one with darkness and then use the power to destroy the darkness whole. Perhaps another day, in my youth," the Baron thought to himself, "I would have died by his trickery. But today, I shall not.") The Baron proceeded to drink the lifeblood from the knight, and as Ihsan died he begged in a whisper to become just like Sengir. The Dark Baron smiled, pulled free of the Paladin, then spoke the words and incantations of a powerful spell he had learned from Grandmother Sengir, calling upon the magic of the swamps and bogs to fill Ihsan's body with death. When Sengir stood and wiped his mouth clean of the red stain, Ihsan was dead.

But not undead.

The Baron had not turned Ihsan into a Vampire, but a ghost—an impotent, helpless spirit, a puppet under the Vampire lord's control rather than a being that could fight back and eventually usurp its maker. Binding the Paladin's spirit to his own signet ring, the Baron then placed the ring on his index finger and ordered Ihsan to stand by his side and act as his guardian, ally, and companion for all of the days to come. Cruelly, the Baron told Ihsan that he would never be his own creature again, that he would always be the thrall of the ring's owner.

Ihsan begged and wept for a hundred days, but the Baron paid no heed, for what is a hundred days to an immortal? Now, Ihsan is one of the Baron's most treasured possessions, and the Serra Paladins have vowed to destroy the traitor of their order: Ihsan the weak, Ihsan the fallen, Ihsan the betrayer.

• Irini Sengir

Irini, Baron Sengir's daughter, wants to own his signet ring herself, for she wishes to control, torment and drive Ihsan completely mad. Her Dwarven heritage has faded over the centuries, as the Baron has altered her shape and outward demeanor to suit his own aesthetic pleasures. Now, Irini is a woman of miniature beauty, who harbors enormous, dark passions.

• Eron the Relentless

Once, Eron was merely a common thief from Aysen who did service for a corrupt Wizard Savant. As a reward for his loyalty and productivity after a particularly dangerous journey, the wizard used his books of dark magic (a bribe from Baron Sengir) to transform Eron into an immortal. When the Baron found out that the Wizard Savant had created an immortal without his permission, he became quite cross. Soon after, the wizard suddenly vanished, never to be seen again, and Eron struck out on his own. Eventually, Eron realized that he was bored with his life and went to the Koskun mountains, where he declared himself King of the Goblins. He was soon assassinated, and came back again to continue his reign, a cycle he has repeated again and again.

Eron has been contacted by Baron Sengir a number of times, and he knows that the Baron wishes to meet him and see how his “stay in immortality” is going. So far, Eron has politely declined every invitation to Castle Sengir. Eron fears Baron Sengir more than anything else, for he has the feeling that the Baron is just biding his time, waiting for the right moment to strike. The narrow mountain pass that leads from the Barony to Koskun Falls is watched by Eron's best guards day and night all year round, and even though Eron's spies would tell him well ahead of time if the Baron were planning to lead an army through the pass, he is still worried. Eron tries to get supplies and food to the villages the Baron has acquired over the years, but he is never really sure whether what he sends reaches them.

• Food

The denizens of Koskun Keep must eat; if Eron doesn't feed his people, they will likely revolt and cause an untold amount of damage to both themselves and his rule. Eron has arranged for food to be delivered regularly to Koskun Keep—the result of a stronghanded trade agreement with Aysen. If the food supply between Koskun and Aysen were interrupted somehow, Eron's people would surely turn against him.

• Thieves and Rogues

Koskun Keep is a milling ground for the criminal element of the Homelands. Many of those who flee persecution in Aysen eventually end up in either An-Havva or Koskun, and Eron wonders how long it is going to be before he gets the first Death Speaker on his doorstep, and how Aysen will react to his harboring of their heretics. He turns a blind eye to most of the crime that happens in his realm, but he takes special exception to the doings of two thieves, Joven and Chandler. Once, the two tricked him out of one of the few possessions he really valued, an Ebony Rhino left over from the Great War that one of the Goblin families traded him for status. If he ever catches either Joven or Chandler on his side of Strongrock, he's going to make sure they pay for a very, very long time.

• Keeping the Peace

At the western base of the Koskun Mountains lies a huge forest that divides the mountains from the plains. In the distant past it was simple to traverse through the forest and come out on the far side. But now there is some force, some controlling entity that ensures that any war parties Eron sends are destroyed or utterly vanished, while any unarmed Trade Caravans are let through unmolested. He doesn't know what it is in the Great Wood that he dislikes so much, but looking from one of the ridges overlooking the tree-topped landscape gives him the chills. He knows that whatever is there is not actively trying to destroy him, but he still doesn't trust whatever force is controlling the creatures of that haunted place.

• Anaba Minotaurs

The Anaba Minotaurs live in a hidden part of the Koskun Mountains. They lead a simple, quiet life, although the young Minotaurs that have left in search of adventure elsewhere, have started to draw attention to their part of the mountains. It is only a matter of time before one of Eron's search parties find them, and then not much longer before he brings them into his sphere of corrupting influence. There is a certain tension in the air, as every day brings the Goblin parties one step closer to discovering their ancestral home and bringing an end to the Minotaurs' peaceful, spiritual culture.

GREEN

• The Great Wood

When the Great War left the rest of the planet a barren wasteland, this section of the world grew and flowered due to the rift created by the Ancient whom Ravi defeated. Creatures continued to live and die as they always had, and some that had been left here after the Great War managed to flourish among the trees of the Great Wood.

When Feroz's Ban was put into place, the normal flow of energy through this world was hindered. It still flowed in at the same rate, but it left at a much slower rate, as if its stream had been dammed. The trees grew at an astounding rate, and the forest became healthy and incredibly fertile. The large number of creatures within the Wood kept most of the other survivors of the Great War clear of the forest.

• An-Havva

The pioneers from Aysen, those escaping the bureaucracy and tyranny of a closed-minded people, settled by the Great Wood. They built houses, plowed fields, carefully harvested select sections of the Wood for lumber, and flourished in their fierce independence. Despite its people's general mistrust of outsiders, An-Havva became a thriving midway between Koskun and Aysen, the place where travelers and wanderers alike now often stop for a meal, repairs, or just some company. Many even build houses and settle in for a season or two or even longer, glad to have found a community where corruption will not be tolerated.

• Autumn Willow

In every forest there is a sense of presence between the trees and in every living thing. When Feroz put the Ban into place, the aura in the Great Wood increased to the point that it became a sentient, physical manifestation: the Autumn Willow, an avatar of the Great Wood itself. The Autumn Willow gained power over the years, and when the first pioneers arrived from Aysen to settle on the edge of her Wood, she went forth and met them, and found that they were good people. She created a path for them between the Koskun Mountains and their main settlement, a township called An-Havva. Traders, a necessity to An-Havva, Koskun, and Aysen, have come to know this path as the Lady's Path and are

allowed to travel it through the mountains. War parties from either Aysen or Koskun Keep, however, are detained or even destroyed by the path's guardians if they are too belligerent.

A huge river courses through the middle of the Great Wood, fast and full of rapids. Where the Lady's Path intersects it, the Autumn Willow had the Faeries construct a large bridge; she then set them to keep any interlopers from crossing it. Any being who tries to cross that bridge without her permission is beset by a host of Faeries who push them back; if they persist in their attempts to cross, the Faeries drive them to their deaths in the frothing water beneath the bridge.

• Changing Times

Time continued, with the Autumn Willow acting as the balancing agent between all of the cultures and factions within her reach and keeping a careful eye on all of the lands and peoples of this world. Occasionally, she would walk the streets of An-Havva in human guise, the better to understand her neighbors. When Baron Sengir suddenly ceased his obvious machinations against the citizenship of Aysen, she grew concerned about his motives. She consulted her divining pool and saw a terrible future, one where Baron Sengir marched all of the survivors of a terrible war down a long stairwell leading deep into the earth and then through a gate into a place far away. Though only a possibility, a reflection of chance, the divination still chilled her.

When Feroz's Ban failed as a result of his death and Serra's exit from the plane of Ulgrotha, the Autumn Willow felt the energies that sustained her begin to fade. She knows that with the strength she has now, she may be able to restore the broken mana channels and bring the planet back to life—but it would cost the lives of every creature there, including her own. If she doesn't use her power, however, it will continue to wane until she ceases to exist, and Baron Sengir may very well take over the Homelands once she has faded to nothingness. She is desperately trying to find some other way, because to destroy all of the ones that she loves would require a cruelty that even an incarnation of nature cannot endure. So she waits—for a champion, an event, or a miracle—but she knows that she cannot wait much longer.

SEER ANALYSIS SHAWN F. CARNES

Hello, planeswalkers! My name is Shawn Carnes, and I'm one of the tried and tested rules experts here at Wizards of the Coast. This time around, we get a chance to take a look at the prestige format of Homelands, the story surrounding the latest expansion for the card game Magic: the Gathering. As always, I'm here to call the play-by-play from the storyline of the comic as it translates into the game, also providing color commentary along the way. So, without further delay, onward to Homelands!

Within the multiverse of Dominia, the Homelands are located on a plane called Ulgrotha. While this place is quite distant from Dominaria, there are some significant connections between the two. One such connection can be found in the form of one of the Homelands' more famous inhabitants, the vampire lord Baron Sengir. The Baron in the card game is a black Legend, costing 5 mana of any color and 3 black mana to summon. Not only is he 5/5 and flying, he gains +2/+2 for each creature he sends to the graveyard, much in the same way the Sengir Vampire does. He also can tap to regenerate a target vampire. Needless to say, Baron Sengir is a powerful Legend.

The start of the Homelands comic introduces an interesting artifact highlighted in the expansion—the Apocalypse Chime. Notice how it literally melted a Spitting Slug, shattered an Obsidian Golem, and even killed an ancient

planeswalker? Well, in the game the Apocalypse Chime is an artifact that buries all cards from the Homelands expansion. This kind of card has been seen before in the various expansions. City in a Bottle, from Arabian Nights, does a similar effect to cards from the Arabian Nights set. You might ask yourself, with this knowledge in hand, how could the Chime affect creatures like the Slug and the Golem? It's dramatic license, my dear reader! Even though these creatures are from other sets, the story places them within the realm of Homelands.



Long after the Apocalypse Chime has done its destruction and the smoke has cleared, a wandering planeswalker named Feroz makes his first appearance on the plane. Feroz proves to be quite an enigmatic character. As he takes his first steps in the Homelands, he makes an interesting discovery. There in the sands beneath his feet is a Didgeridoo. The Didgeridoo is an artifact that costs one mana to cast, but for three mana, a player can use its fast effect to take any minotaur from his or her hand and put it directly into play. With the abundance of new minotaurs in the Homelands expansion, this could prove very useful for those players who have been aching to build



a minotaur deck! In the story, Feroz blows into the Didgeeridoo and unwittingly summons the Anaba Minotaur, Sandruu. Realizing that he has summoned a creature against its will, Feroz apologizes to Sandruu, explaining that it is not his way to use magic to summon creatures, for battle, or otherwise. And there, a friendship is born.

Along their journey across the countryside, Feroz and Sandruu encounter the fearsome Root Spider. Normally, the Root Spider is a 2/2 creature with the ability to gain +1/+0 if it is declared as a blocker. However, this particular spider looks as if it has been subjected to Giant Growth! The spider tricks the wanderers by imitating a child's distress call. The noble Feroz rushes in to help, only to find himself entangled in the spider's web. Sandruu quickly realizes that even he cannot match the spider's strength. But that's where things get interesting! From out of the night sky comes a trio of Serra Angels. The Angels would normally make short work of the Root Spider, but Feroz pleads with the angels to spare it. True to his being Feroz stresses that the Root Spider was only following its nature and shouldn't be penalized for that.

After the decidedly lopsided battle, the beautiful Serra steps from the shadows and makes her debut. Feroz immediately questions her about the use of the lovely Angels as her fighters. Serra explains that the Angels are composed of pure white mana and fight willingly on her side. Feroz is impressed with Serra's magic and power and she, in turn, is impressed with his attitude towards life.

Moving on, the dinner scene between Serra, Feroz, and Baron Sengir not only grants us a glimpse at some of the card play in Homelands, but gives us a chance to discover some secrets of Homelands. First off, the Black Carriage's entrance was nothing less than shocking. In Homelands, the Black

Carriage is a black card costing three mana of any color and two black. It is a 4/4 trampling creature which does not untap as normal...you need to sacrifice one of your creatures to do that. Still, trample is an impressive ability, and trample is almost what it does to that poor woman. Feroz's quick thinking, however, saves the day; a quickly summoned Brass Man saved the woman. I wonder if Feroz had even traveled to one of the many planes of Rabiah the Infinite as depicted in the Magic: The Gathering—Arabian Nights expansion set and Acclaim comic of the same name. Where else would he learn to summon a Brass Man?

The action moves to Castle Sengir, the home of the nefarious Baron Sengir. Castle Sengir is a card in

Homelands as well, introducing "triple lands". These cards can produce three different kinds of mana, much in the same way a Celestial Prism does from the Magic: The Gathering—4th Edition set. We meet Grandmother Sengir, who as Baron Sengir reveals, isn't exactly his grandmother. According to the Baron, he found her and brought her into his "family." In Homelands, Grandmother Sengir is a black Legend, requiring 4 mana of any color and 1

black mana to summon. She is a 3/3 with the special ability to use one black mana and one mana of any color in order to tap and give a target creature -1/-1 until the end of the turn. Also, what is that around her neck? Isn't that something we saw earlier in the issue? Isn't she someone we saw earlier as well?

Speaking of characters we have seen elsewhere, one of the highlights in this issue is the confrontation between Sandruu, Feroz and Taysir! Loyal readers will remember Taysir from the Ice Age and Arabian Nights comics miniseries. However, this

Taysir seems to be a tad more bitter than last we saw him. It seems that Taysir is slightly green with envy over an old flame's love for Sandruu. Apparently the planeswalker



Kristina, who has spurned Taysir's advances in the past, has decided that Sandruu is more her type. The conniving battlemage, Ravidel, shows this scene to Taysir to set the wheels of his dark plan in motion—a plan that won't come to fruition for thousands of years, but can be enjoyed by anyone willing to pick up Acclaim's Shadow Mage trade paperbacks, or the current Wayfarer miniseries.

Sandruu comes out the worst for the wear in this exchange as Taysir, a master of all five colors of magic, banishes him to a faraway plane from which immediate return is not an option. Feroz, in an attempt to stave off the powerful planeswalker, engages Taysir in combat. Because of Feroz's vow not to use creatures to fight for him, he finds himself slightly overwhelmed by Taysir's brute force. However, just because Feroz doesn't use a lot of creatures, he is far from helpless. With the aid of two powerful artifacts—the Rod of Ruin and Aladdin's Ring—Feroz manages to deal quite a bit of damage to the enraged Taysir. In a desperate attempt to regain the upper hand, Taysir lashes out and casts Earthquake, damaging both parties and any creatures involved. In the wake of the damage, Feroz staggers to the hurt Taysir and kills him—or does he?

Throughout the comic as well as the expansion, we are treated to slices of the many different cultures that comprise the Homelands. The Minotaurs, for example, are detailed heavily. First, Serra and Feroz are married by an Anaba Shaman. References are also made to an Anaba Bodyguard and an Anaba Spirit Crafter. Now, courtesy of Homelands, the advantages of the orcs, dwarves, goblins, etc. have been conferred to the Minotaurs. In essence, Minotaurs can actually affect other Minotaurs. The observant player of Magic: the Gathering will also notice that this applies to the Hurloon Minotaurs from the original set as well as the Labyrinth Minotaurs, blue creatures from Homelands.

Until next time, may the Apocalypse Chime never toll for thee.

Shawn



Apocalypse Chime - The Chime is an ancient artifact that might once have been used to decimate the world that would eventually be called Homelands. It is still said to exist in the depths of Baron Sengir's stronghold. Use this card in a Magic: The Gathering game duel, and all Homelands cards are instantly removed from the game! DESTROY!



Baron Sengir - This shadowy entity lurks on the darker edges of the Homelands, acquiring his legendary status. It is said that he will one day rise to command an entire nation of vampires. At his beck and call will be a dreaded army of the undead.DOMINATE!



Feroz's Ban - According to all accounts, the planeswalker Feroz sealed the Homelands from the rest of the infinite planes of Dominia, effectively making his world invisible. Feroz is loathe to use creatures to fight his battles. Feroz's Ban makes it more difficult to summon creatures. Thus, battles must be based on skill and strategy rather than brute force. DEFEND!

End word

It's in your hands now, this work of ours that has taken so long to come to fruition. At this point the Autumn Willow's pool of prophecy will not yield a guaranteed future, and if the Baron knows what is going to happen in the next few months, he isn't telling. What we do know is that it's going to be amazing to see the characters come to life and take on a mythology of their own through the card set, this comic, and all of the other Homelands work.

In the end, it's all about the process of story and tale—watching the fables be told again and again in different and interesting ways, always set off by the stuff of context. Together, we've had a chance to create something that's going to change and grow with every telling, and of that we can be proud.

Dream well,
Scott C. Hungerford
Kyle Namvar
18th September, 1995

D.G. Chichester

A graduate of New York University's 24-Frames-a-Second film program, D.G. Chichester first adapted those visual talents to the words-and-pictures world of comic books. Chichester quickly made a name for himself in comics, first as an editor contributing to Archie Goodwin's team at Marvel's Epic Comics division, and subsequently as a freelance writer.

His comics credits cover most every major publisher (DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, Acclaim), on titles that include Daredevil, Elektra: Root of Evil, Hellraiser, Terror, Inc., Judge Dredd, and Motorhead. Other writing credits include "Primal," an original screenplay developed with collaborators Clive Barker and Erik Saltzgaber, as well as story and dialogue for computer and video games.

D.G. (Don't Guess) divides his time between living in upstate New York and lurking in shadowy corners of cyberspace. He credits his wife, Jennifer, with encouraging his deviant interests.

Rebecca Guay

Rebecca Guay began her career in comics working on such titles as Marvel's 2099 Unlimited, Conan, and DC's Swamp Thing. Under DC's Vertigo imprint, Rebecca was the regular artist on Black Orchid for over a year, and painted the corresponding trading cards. Her painted work can also be seen in Topps' Star Wars Galaxy II, the Aliens/Predator series and the Endless Gallery for DC, as well as various children's publications including Cricket Magazine.

Rebecca was born and raised in northern Massachusetts; she graduated from Pratt Institute with a major in illustration. She cites Homelands on the World of Magic: The Gathering as a career highlight, and will be painting a Serra Angel prestige format comic for Acclaim, next year. She currently lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Jeff Gomez

Raised on the mean streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side, Jeff Gomez had an epiphany during the summer of 1977, when he saw Star Wars and read The Lord of the Rings. He is now studying to be a Dark Eminence.

Jeff spearheaded Acclaim Comics' acquisition of the Magic: The Gathering comic book license, and wrote several of the Armada line's first Magic miniseries. His most popular creation for the comics is the young planeswalker-in-training, Jared Carthalion, who appears in the Shadow Mage and Wayfarer miniseries. Jeff faces the daunting task of insuring strong continuity between Acclaim's various Magic projects, and the complex fantasy universe being created by Wizards of the Coast. He cites his work as editor of Homelands on the World of Magic: The Gathering as his proudest moment yet.



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